

Which **options strategy** could you use to generate income?

a. Covered Call

b. Credit Spread

c. Iron Condor

d. All of the Above

If you know the answer, we like the way you think. At TD Ameritrade, our award-winning experience is designed to take your options trading to the next level. Get access to our intuitive trading platform, thinkorswim®, commission-free online trading,* specialized options education, and a trade desk team ready to gut check your toughest options strategies.

Start options trading at tdameritrade.com/knowyouroptions



Where Smart Investors Get SmarterSM

*Applies to U.S. exchange-listed stocks, ETFs, and options. A \$0.65 per contract fee applies for options trades.

Answer: d. All of the Above. Options trading is subject to significant risks and is not suitable for all investors. Multi-leg strategies entail additional costs. Options trading privileges subject to TD Ameritrade review and approval. Before trading options, carefully read Characteristics and Risks of Standardized Options. Contact TD Ameritrade at 800-669-3900 for a copy. This is not an offer or solicitation in any jurisdiction where we are not authorized to do business. TD Ameritrade, Inc., member FINRA/SIPC. © 2019 TD Ameritrade.

VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

THE WEEK

THE BEST OF THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

The faces of 2019



DECEMBER 27, 2019/JANUARY 10, 2020 VOLUME 19 ISSUE 956-957

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS

WWW.THEWEEK.COM



Numbers tell only half the story.

Your investments deserve the full story.



Strategic investing takes us beyond the numbers. That's why over 400¹ of our experts go out in the field to examine opportunities firsthand—like how e-commerce growth is spurring demand for more innovative packaging solutions. Our rigorous approach helps us select and manage investments for our funds.

Put our strategic investing approach to work for you today.

troweprice.com/fullstory | 1-877-872-5475

Consider the investment objectives, risks, and charges and expenses carefully before investing. For a prospectus or, if available, a summary prospectus containing this and other information, call 1-877-804-2315. Read it carefully.

¹ Investment professionals as of 12/31/18.

All funds are subject to market risk, including possible loss of principal.
T. Rowe Price Investment Services, Inc., Distributor.

Editor's letter

On the cusp of a new year, it is customary to express some hope and optimism. Summoning cheery thoughts about 2020, however, requires a bit more sunniness than I or, I suspect, most of you can muster. The year will likely start with the impeachment trial in the Senate, which is sure to degenerate into another depressing display of shameless hypocrisy and post-truth partisanship. The Democratic primaries will follow, unleashing a fresh round of generational warfare that will either leave people under 35 or over that age deeply dissatisfied with the nominee (see Best U.S. columns). And then we will move into the general election, which promises to be the ugliest presidential election of our lifetimes—a sustained Category 5 hurricane of negative ads, disinformation (of both foreign and domestic origin), and fear bordering on panic. In the Trump era, Republicans and Democrats have come to view each other as invading zombie armies hell-bent on *their* America's destruction.

The potential for an election disaster is very real. In one possible scenario, President Trump narrowly loses, denounces the results as a fraudulent coup—millions of illegal votes! hacking by Ukraine and China!—and refuses to vacate the White House. At his urging, armed supporters battle protesters in the streets. Would Mitch McConnell and other Republican leaders insist Trump leave? That's no longer clear. In another scenario, Trump loses the popular vote but wins again in the Electoral College. Traumatized Democrats can't bear this repeat of 2016, and refuse to accept Trump's legitimacy. An even more perilous scenario: The vote count is too close to call, with confrontational recounts in several swing states and perhaps a Supreme Court intervention. Democracies die, political scientists tell us, when the credibility of elections and vital institutions is eroded and the rule of law is destroyed. Let's hope our democracy can survive the next election, and the tumultuous year to come.

William Falk
Editor-in-chief

NEWS

- 4 Main stories**
A historic impeachment vote in the House; Congress moves a massive spending bill
- 6 Controversy of the week**
What lessons should Americans take from Boris Johnson's resounding win in the U.K. election?
- 7 The U.S. at a glance**
The Mormon Church's \$100 billion stockpile; James Comey's regrets
- 8 The world at a glance**
Pope Francis unlocks secret files on abusive priests; Australia swelters as temperatures rocket
- 10 People**
Katie Hill's "cyber-exploitation"; Richard Grant's chaotic childhood
- 11 Briefing**
How Hanukkah became an American Jewish answer to Christmas
- 12 Best U.S. columns**
The FBI's abuse of surveillance; the scam charity run by Trump
- 15 Best international columns**
Indian Muslims protest new citizenship law
- 16 Talking points**
Trump's executive order on anti-Semitism; the debate over banning online porn; would Joe Biden be a one-term president?



Protesters in Chicago rally in support of impeachment. (p.4)

YEAR END

- 18 Year in review**
The Mueller report, a massacre in El Paso, and a request to Ukraine
- 20 Quiz**
How well can you remember the big stories of 2019?
- 30 Books**
The best fiction and nonfiction of the year
- 32 Film**
Critics' top movies of the past 12 months

Boris Johnson
(pages 6, 14)



LEISURE

- 36 Food & Drink**
The sandwich wars, and other trends of 2019
- 38 Travel**
A trip to Lapland to meet Santa Claus
- 39 Consumer**
For the holidays, maybe a gold and diamond piñata?

BUSINESS

- 42 News at a glance**
A pause in the U.S.-China trade war; Boeing halts 737 Max production
- 44 Making money**
The miseries of having a terrible boss
- 45 Best columns**
A magic decade for the stock market; the world gives up on free trade

THE WEEK

Editor-in-chief: William Falk

Managing editors: Theunis Bates, Mark Gimein
Deputy editor/International: Susan Caskie
Deputy editor/Arts: Chris Mitchell
Senior editors: Alex Dalenberg, Danny Funt, Michael Jaccarino, Dale Obbie, Zach Schonbrun, Hallie Stiller
Art director: Dan Josephs
Photo editor: Loren Talbot
Copy editors: Jane A. Halsey, Jay Wilkins
Researchers: Joyce Chu, Alisa Partlan
Contributing editors: Ryan Devlin, Bruno Maddox

Chief sales and marketing officer: Adam Dub

SVP, marketing: Lisa Boyars
Executive account director: Sara Schiano
Midwest sales director: John Goldrick
Southeast director: Jana Robinson
West Coast executive director: Tony Imperato
Director, direct response: Alexandra Riera
Research and insights manager: Joan Cheung
Programmatic revenue and ad operations director: Isaiah Ward

Chief executive officer: Sara O'Connor
Chief operating & financial officer: Kevin E. Morgan

Director of financial reporting: Arielle Starkman
Consumer marketing director: Leslie Guarnieri
HR manager: Joy Hart
Operations manager: Cassandra Mondonedo

Chairman: Jack Griffin
Dennis Group CEO: James Tye

U.K. founding editor: Jolyon Connell

Company founder: Felix Dennis

Visit us at TheWeek.com.
 For customer service go to www.TheWeek.com/service or phone us at 1-877-245-8151.
 Renew a subscription at www.RenewTheWeek.com or give a gift at www.GiveTheWeek.com.

The House impeaches Trump

What happened

President Trump this week became the third president in American history to be impeached by the House of Representatives, which voted along party lines to charge him with abuse of power and obstruction of Congress related to his pressuring Ukraine to investigate his political enemies. The House voted after six hours of rancorous debate, in which Democrats argued that Trump had put his own personal political interests above national security and compromised the integrity of U.S. elections by withholding nearly \$400 million in congressionally approved security aid for Ukraine. Democrats on the Judiciary Committee formally explained the charges in a 658-page report that also accused Trump of committing federal crimes as part of his abuse of power, including bribery and wire fraud. "It is tragic that the president's reckless actions make impeachment necessary," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. "If we do not act now, we would be derelict in our duty."

House Republicans fiercely defended Trump, insisting the president did nothing wrong and accusing Democrats of trying to overturn the 2016 election. "They hate this president. They hate those of us who voted for him," said Rep. Chris Stewart of Utah. "That's what this vote is." Rep. Barry Loudermilk, R-Ga., said that when Jesus was falsely accused, he was given "more rights" than Trump. The night before the vote, President Trump sent an irate and rambling six-page letter to Speaker Pelosi on White House stationery accusing Democrats of conducting an "illegal, partisan attempted coup" and of cheapening "the importance of the very ugly word, impeachment!"

A handful of moderate Democrats were reportedly pushing Pelosi to withhold sending the articles of impeachment to the Senate and keep them open for months in case further information is obtained. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has promised a speedy acquittal, and refused Democrats' request that they be able to call new witnesses, including national security adviser John Bolton and Acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney. "I'm not an impartial juror," McConnell said. "Everything I do during this, I'm coordinating with the White House counsel."

What the editorials said

Impeachment "ought to inspire the utmost seriousness and patriotism from members of Congress," said *The Washington Post*. Instead, Senate Republicans have baldly declared that they intend to hold a truncated sham trial. If McConnell gets his way, "crucial witnesses to Trump's alleged abuses of power may never be heard; the president's flagrant stonewalling of congressional authority may be allowed to stand."



Pelosi arrives for the vote: 'He left us no choice.'

"It's not the Senate's job to dig House Democrats out of the disaster their partisan zeal led them into," said the *New York Post*. House leaders chose to rush the articles of impeachment to the Senate without hearing from key witnesses because they didn't want a lengthy court fight over subpoenas dragging impeachment into the middle of the 2020 campaign. Sorry, Dems, you don't get a "do-over." What are Republicans afraid of? asked the *Houston Chronicle*. If more evidence would fully clear Trump, the Senate GOP should welcome hearing from witnesses. A sham trial, on the other hand, would rob the president "of a legitimate claim to the exoneration he says he deserves."

What the columnists said

President Trump is clearly afraid, said David Graham in *The Atlantic.com*. While he has insisted that impeachment is actually good for him politically, his "apoplectic" letter to Pelosi indicates he knows it's actually damaging him. A recent Fox News poll showed that 50 percent of Americans support impeaching Trump and removing him from office, and other polls are in the same range. Given "the intensity of anti-Trump feeling," it's hard to imagine those voters voting for Trump next November.

Impeachment isn't popular enough to be justified, said Andrew McCarthy in *NationalReview.com*. The House shouldn't even consider impeaching a president unless there is overwhelming public consensus for it, compelling two-thirds of the Senate to remove the president from office. The House's party-line vote shows there's nothing close to that on the Ukraine scandal. By sending a case with no chance of conviction to the Senate, Democrats are "trivializing impeachment," paving the way for a future in which routine impeachments and acquittals are just another feature of Washington's ceaseless partisan warfare.

What next?

Republicans have good reason to get Trump's Senate trial over with as soon as possible, said A.B. Stoddard in *TheBulwark.com*. Rudy Giuliani continues to undermine claims of Trump's innocence, bragging this week that he forced out Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch because he needed her "out of the way" while pressuring Ukraine to investigate the Bidens. Federal prosecutors also revealed recently that Giuliani's associate Lev Parnas, who helped him forge connections in Ukraine, concealed a nearly \$1 million payment from Dmitry Firtash, a Ukrainian oligarch with ties to Russian organized crime. Republicans hope "to be done with impeachment before any more news connects Russian money to President Trump." That's why Democrats ought to delay sending articles of impeachment to the Senate, said Will Bunch in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Why let "a kangaroo court" exonerate Trump? An indefinite delay "allows Democrats to hold the trial over the head of the president for the rest of his term," providing a strong disincentive for him to "commit an even worse crime" during the campaign.

The Founders never anticipated today's "hyperpartisan politics," said Elizabeth Drew in *The New York Times*. The Constitution's framers believed that each branch of government would zealously guard its own power and independence. They never envisioned one party in Congress marching in lockstep to protect a president from accountability, much less Trump's "almost cultlike" hold over Republicans. Acquittal "may shatter" the last limits on Trump, said Ronald Brownstein in *CNN.com*. He will rightly conclude that Republicans will stand with him "almost regardless of what he does next," including soliciting foreign interference in the 2020 election. "One party alone cannot defend the norms of democracy and traditional limits on the expansive exercise of presidential power."

Massive spending bill averts a shutdown

What happened

House lawmakers overcame bitter partisanship and impeachment this week to pass a nearly \$1.4 trillion spending package that would fund the entire federal government through September 2020 and avert a government shutdown. The sprawling package—which does not include the roughly two-thirds of total federal spending that goes toward Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and debt service—capped months of furious horse trading between Republicans and Democrats to reach compromises on everything from border wall funding to the creation of a space force, a pet project of President Trump's. The Senate was expected to pass the bill after *The Week* went to press, and President Trump had indicated he would likely sign it into law.



The Space Force: One piece of the stratospheric budget

The bill raises discretionary federal spending by about \$50 billion over last fiscal year and will result in the second consecutive \$1 trillion-plus deficit. It contains wins for both parties—including \$1.375 billion for President Trump's border wall with Mexico. That was far short of the \$8.6 billion the president requested, although the spending accord preserved his ability to divert funding from other sources. Democrats won \$10 million to create a new immigration detention ombudsman to inspect federal detention facilities and address complaints; \$25 million in funding for gun violence research, the first such federal allocation in 20 years; \$425 million to upgrade the security of state election systems; and a \$208 million boost for the Environmental Protection Agency. The deal also raises the national age for tobacco sales from 18 to 21 and includes a 3.1 percent raise for both civilian and military employees.

What the editorials said

The spending accord was “cause for celebration” and welcome proof that Republicans and Democrats “are able to find common ground and get things done amid the impeachment drama,” said the Columbus, Ohio, *Dispatch*. Now, if only Washington's politicians could extend this cooperative spirit to “other efforts that deserve bipartisan support,” although for the moment we rejoice that “the people's business can go on” amid partisan rancor. Civilian federal workers made out very well, said *The Baltimore*

Sun. In return for giving Trump his coveted “Space Force,” Democrats won 2.1 million federal employees a “well-deserved gift” of 12 weeks of paid parental leave. Service members already have the benefit, but the “much-needed paid time off” is a boon for parents dealing with the birth, adoption, or fostering of a new child.

What the columnists said

Creating a Space Force as the sixth branch of the U.S. military is a good idea whose time has finally come, said Jonathan Trugman in the *New York*

Post. Global adversaries such as China and Russia are “investing in space like never before,” and private companies are “already part of the new space race.” The \$13 billion budgeted for the force over the next five years will consolidate 15,000 service members (mostly from the Air Force) into a specialized organization with streamlined procedures that will open up a “new field of advanced space engineering talent” and let America “compete and dominate for decades to come.”

Goodies like this don't come cheap, and they're just more evidence of the federal government's “nonstop spending binge,” said Maya MacGuineas in *TheHill.com*. The spending package is filled with budget busters, including \$35 billion in “special interest tax breaks,” at least \$25 billion in “new spending gimmicks,” and billions in unnecessary tax repeals. Adding to our “already massive national debt” of more than \$23 trillion is “no way to run a government.”

Looking at what *didn't* make it into this bill reveals a lot about how hard it will be for the next Democratic president to push health-insurance reform through Congress, said Paul Waldman in *The Washington Post*. Just consider: A provision to ban “surprise medical bills,” and to ensure hospitals are up-front about the cost of patient care, was nixed despite support from lawmakers of both parties as well as the White House. At the same time, Congress repealed three health-industry taxes initially introduced to pay for the Affordable Care Act. “This is just one demonstration of the awesome lobbying power wielded by the health-care industry,” and it augers badly for budgets to come.

It wasn't all bad

■ Adam Armstrong today makes good money as a property investor. But he's never forgotten what it was like to grow up poor in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. So last week, the 35-year-old returned to his hometown of Harrisonburg driving a 26-foot truck packed with \$12,000 worth of toys. Wearing a Santa hat, Armstrong handed out 1,327 gifts—including dolls, Nerf guns, board games, and nearly 100 bicycles—to delighted kids at four low-income housing complexes. “You can't put a price on looking at these kids' happy faces,” said Armstrong.

■ A fruitcake sits at the center of Julie Ruttinger's dining table every Christmas, but the Tecumseh, Mich., resident never eats a slice. That's because the cake is a 141-year-old family heirloom. Ruttinger's great-great-grandmother Fidelia Ford had a tradition of baking a fruitcake and letting it age a year before serving during the holidays. But Ford died before her 1878 cake



Ruttinger and the family heirloom.

was ready, and when the holidays arrived, her family regarded it as a keepsake, not a dessert. Ford's descendants have looked after the rock-hard fruitcake ever since, showing it off at family gatherings and educating younger relatives about its story. “It's a great thing,” says Ruttinger, 56. “It's a legacy.”

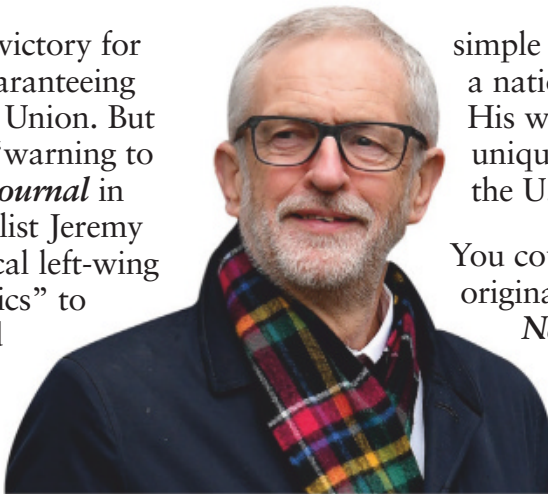
Note to readers

The Week's staff is taking a break for the holidays. Your next issue will arrive in **three** weeks. Our next edition will be dated Jan. 17, and should begin arriving on Jan. 10. *The Week* currently publishes 48 issues a year.

U.K. election: What are the lessons for the U.S.?

British voters last week delivered a thumping victory for Boris Johnson's Conservative Party, finally guaranteeing Britain's long-delayed exit from the European Union. But Johnson's triumph also delivered a powerful "warning to America's Democrats," said *The Wall Street Journal* in an editorial. Behind the unreconstructed socialist Jeremy Corbyn, Britain's Labour Party offered a radical left-wing agenda of "taxes, spending, and identity politics" to win back the white working class that flocked to Johnson's nationalistic Brexit movement in 2016. But this proved to be a colossal miscalculation, with Labour last week even losing some working-class seats it had held since before World War II. Heading into 2020, U.S. Democrats are poised to make exactly the same mistake, said Bret Stephens in *The New York Times*. The party's young, progressive thought leaders insist the best way to win back the white Rust Belt voters who elected Donald Trump is with far-left candidates like Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, and radical policies such as Medicare for All, free college, and the Green New Deal—a strategy that will backfire here as spectacularly as it just did in Britain. For Democrats to oppose Trump in 2020 "with Corbynite candidates and progressive primal screams is to ensure his re-election."

The U.S. is not the U.K., said Eric Levitz in *NYMag.com*, and "Bernie Sanders is not Jeremy Corbyn." A humorless oddball dogged by persistent charges of anti-Semitism, Corbyn is personally unpopular, and exit polls found that voters were rejecting him rather than Labour's "left-wing platform." Corbyn "is sui generis," said John Cassidy in *NewYorker.com*, and "so is the Brexit morass." Corbyn bizarrely declined to take a position on the biggest issue in British politics, while Johnson's brilliantly



Corbyn: Crushed at the polls

simple promise—"Get Brexit done"—promised relief to a nation exhausted by three years of Brexit uncertainty. His winning formula was tied to a "situation that is unique to Britain, and which won't have any bearing on the U.S. election."

You could have made the same argument about the original Brexit vote in 2016, said Roger Cohen in *The New York Times*. Five months later though, Donald

Trump was elected by white working-class voters determined to "take back their country" from immigrants and urban elites, just like the Britons who backed Brexit. Three years later, the divided forces of the global left are still searching for a message that can compete with the populist right's "fanatical singleness of purpose." One glimmer of hope, said Dan Balz in *WashingtonPost.com*, is that "the exhaustion factor could cut differently" in the U.S. than in the U.K. British voters were desperate for an end to the uncertainty of Brexit, whereas many Americans are longing for an end to the "volatility and chaos sown constantly by Trump."

Democrats could learn a lot from Johnson, said Megan McArdle in *The Washington Post*. The key to his huge victory was pairing a Trumpian message of national greatness with a leftist promise of a massive investment in Britain's welfare state and a higher minimum wage. This "combination of left economics and a celebration of the nation-state" could be very popular in the U.S. too, said Andrew Sullivan in *NYMag.com*. To adopt it, Democrats would need to "ignore the woke," stop portraying America as rotten with racism, and adopt realistic immigration policies. A party that finds that patriotic "sweet spot," as Johnson did last week, can "harness the populist tide, rather than be drowned by it."

Only in America

■ A Republican lawmaker is asking that a newly cleaned statue of the Roman goddess Ceres *not* be returned to the dome of Missouri's state capitol. The statue of Ceres, goddess of farming, has stood atop the capitol since 1924 as a tribute to the state's agricultural economy. But Rep. Mike Moon says that because statues of Jesus are barred from public buildings, lawmakers should "stand firm in our beliefs by refusing to honor a pagan god."

■ An Iowa man is denying any racist motive for surrounding his home with painted swastikas and Confederate flags. William Stark lives next to a school with a mostly nonwhite student body and has refused school officials' request that he take down what they say is a racist display. "They don't know their history, evidently," he says.

Good week for:

'They,' which Merriam-Webster's dictionary named as its 2019 Word of the Year. While "they" has been in use as a singular pronoun since the 1300s, the dictionary was honoring its more recent meaning as "a single person whose gender identity is nonbinary."

Oligarchy, after the federal Bureau of Economic Affairs reported that through the third quarter of 2019, corporate taxes accounted for just 3.5 percent of all federal tax revenue—a sharp drop from 9 percent in 2010 and 22 percent in 1960.

Benefits for younger workers, with a report that the Audit Lab, a British marketing agency, allows its mostly under-30 employees to take "hangover days" in order to recover from nights out boozing with clients. Hangover days, the company said, help promote "a trusting environment."

Bad week for:

Male egos, after *J.J.*, a Japanese fashion magazine aimed at young women, earned global ridicule for advising its readers to flatter men by telling them they "sound like Socrates" whenever they say something "complicated."

Carnivores, after two inspectors from the federal Food Safety and Inspection Service filed whistleblower complaints alleging that under new, looser inspection rules, the nation's pork will soon be contaminated with feces, toenails, sex organs, bladders, and hair.

That awkward age, after middle-school students were evacuated from a Florida school bus following reports of a possible toxic gas release. First responders traced the source of the odor to a single student who had doused himself with too much Axe body spray.

SCOTUS takes on presidential immunity

The Supreme Court agreed last week to consider whether President Trump can shield his finances from investigations, setting up a potential landmark ruling on presidential immunity during the 2020 campaign. The court will consolidate three cases about subpoena power—two involving House Democrats, the other involving New York City's district attorney—when it hears oral arguments in March ahead of an expected June ruling. Until then, the court stayed lower-court decisions against Trump, so his tax returns and other financial documents will remain secret throughout impeachment proceedings. Investigators are seeking records from Deutsche Bank, Capital One, and Trump's accounting firm, Mazars USA. In prior fights over presidential immunity, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled against Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton.

Salt Lake City

Uncharitable: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has stockpiled \$100 billion in tax-free funds intended



LDS headquarters

for charity, according to a whistleblower complaint revealed this week. David Nielsen, 41, a Mormon who until

September worked in the church's investment division, Ensign Peak Advisors, told the IRS that Ensign Peak has not funded any charitable causes in 22 years. The church collects about \$7 billion a year from members, the complaint says. About \$6 billion is said to cover operating costs, while the rest is invested by Ensign. In a statement, Nielsen said, "Would you pay tithing instead of water, electricity, or feeding your family if you knew that it would sit around by the billions until the Second Coming of Christ?" Church officials said the complaint relies on "limited information"; under the IRS whistleblower law, Nielsen would share in any recovery that the agency made from the church as a result of his complaint.

Frankfort, Ky.

Get out of jail: After losing his re-election bid in November, Republican Gov. Matt Bevin issued a staggering 428 pardons before leaving office last week. One



'Sketchy evidence'

went to Patrick Baker, sentenced in 2017 to 19 years in prison for posing as a law enforcement officer and fatally shooting a man in a home-invasion robbery. Baker's family held a fundraiser that raised \$21,500 for Bevin, and Baker's brother and sister-in-law each gave an additional \$4,000. In his pardon order, Bevin said the evidence against Baker was "sketchy at best," to which sentencing Judge David Williams said, "I've never seen a more compelling or complete case." Bevin also cited shoddy evidence when pardoning Micah Schoettle, convicted of raping a 9-year-old, and Delmar Partin, convicted of murdering and decapitating his former lover. Kenton County prosecutor Rob Sanders called the pardons "an abomination."

Port Washington, Wis.

Swing-state purge: A Wisconsin judge ordered the state Elections Commission to take about 234,000 voters off the rolls last week because they may have moved, drawing accusations of partisan gamesmanship in the crucial swing state. Judge Paul Malloy, a GOP appointee, ordered the purge after the commission sent letters in October asking voters to confirm their address. More than 170,000 hadn't responded by Dec. 5. Another 60,000 letters were returned as undeliverable. The bipartisan commission wants to hold off on removing voters until 2021, but Malloy ordered it done well before the 2020 election. "It's not that difficult to do it sooner," he said. In a state President Trump won by fewer than 23,000 votes in 2016, Democrats note, the letters disproportionately targeted liberal cities like Milwaukee and Madison. About 55 percent of letters went to municipalities where Hillary Clinton bested Trump.



El Paso, Texas

Stop-work order: A federal judge blocked the Trump administration last week from diverting \$3.6 billion in defense funds to construct a southern border wall, citing legislative restrictions crafted by House Republicans in 2014 to curtail President Obama's powers. Those rules prevent a president from unilaterally moving to "increase," "eliminate," or "reduce" budget funds authorized by Congress—in Obama's case, repurposing funds from the space program. U.S. District Court Judge David Briones said Trump had unlawfully sought to increase the \$1.375 billion approved by Congress for border-wall construction to \$3.6 billion, and a federal judge in California ruled similarly days later. Briones did approve \$2.5 billion shifted from separate Pentagon funding to wall construction as a "counter-drug activity." Although the Trump administration told contractors to stop wall construction to comply with the court order, it pledged to appeal the rulings.

Philadelphia

Not OK: Two U.S. Military Academy cadets and a Naval Academy midshipman were seen on TV last week at the annual Army-Navy football game flashing a possible "white power" hand gesture. Posing for ESPN's pregame show, the students made a downward "OK" sign at least five times—an increasingly popular sign among white supremacists that resembles the letters WP. One student made the gesture behind the head of a nonwhite cadet. Both academies said they are investigating the students' intentions. Before the game, West Point officials dropped the slogan GFBD—"God forgives, brothers don't"—from rally flags used at football games after it came to light that the phrase is popular among white-supremacist prison and motorcycle gangs. Responding to the "OK" controversy, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said he doesn't believe white supremacy is "an issue in the military." Navy won the game, 31-7.

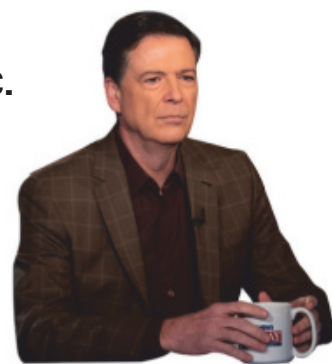


Conduct unbecoming

Washington, D.C.

Mr. Comey regrets:

Former FBI director James Comey conceded this week he'd been "overconfident" about the Russia probe, saying "there was real sloppiness" in the surveillance of former Trump campaign aide Carter Page. Comey, who oversaw the probe before getting fired in 2017, accepted the findings of Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz that the FBI made 17 significant errors in its application to eavesdrop on Page. "He's right. I was wrong," Comey said. Asked on Fox News why he's been taking a "victory lap" since the report came out, Comey stressed that Horowitz found no evidence that the Russia probe was politically motivated. He said it was "irresponsible" of Attorney General William Barr to speculate that agents acted in bad faith. After the interview, Trump attacked Comey on Twitter, asking "What are the consequences for his unlawful conduct. Could it be years in jail?"



Comey: 'Overconfident'



Workers on the march

Paris

Crippling strikes: Mass protests against French President Emmanuel Macron's pension reforms continued this week with strikes that caused blackouts, school closures, and cancellations of flights and trains. Many tourist sites were closed to visitors, including the Eiffel Tower, as workers walked off their jobs. The strikes began in early December over Macron's plan to replace France's 42 different pension schemes with a one-size-fits-all system and raise the retirement age from 62 to 64. Jean-Paul Delevoye, the lead cabinet official on pension reform, resigned this week after admitting that he had failed to disclose income from numerous private sector side gigs. He held administrative roles with an insurance group and with the rail operator SNCF, both of which have an interest in pension reform.

Toronto

Suing the gunmaker: Victims of a 2018 mass shooting in Toronto have filed a \$114 million class action lawsuit against Smith & Wesson, accusing the U.S. gunmaker of failing to introduce safety features that could have prevented the attack. Gunman Faisal Hussain killed two people and wounded 13 more on Toronto's bustling Danforth Avenue using a stolen M&P .40-caliber semiautomatic pistol. The lawsuit says Smith & Wesson agreed in 2003 to incorporate "smart gun" technology—such as fingerprint scanners and radio frequency chips—that would have locked the weapon when it was picked up by an unauthorized user such as Hussain. But Smith & Wesson, says the suit, delayed the rollout of that tech; the gunmaker has yet to comment. "This is an industry that has refused to modernize," said Malcolm Ruby, lawyer for the victims.

Madrid

Failure on climate: After two weeks of bickering, delegates from nearly 200 countries failed to achieve their two key goals at U.N. climate talks in Madrid: setting bolder targets for emissions cuts and creating a global carbon-trading system. Delegates agreed there was an "urgent need" to cut planet-heating greenhouse gases in line with the goals set in the 2015 Paris Agreement, which aims to keep global temperatures from rising by more than 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the century. Yet none of the major emitters—China, the U.S., the European Union, and India—is on track to meet its Paris commitments. China, the biggest emitter, continues to build coal-fired plants, while under President Trump, the U.S. has repealed emissions-reducing rules on energy and transport.



Not impressed with talks

Brasília

Netflix satire offends: A Netflix Christmas special that implies Jesus was gay has sparked fury in Brazil, with calls for the comedy's creators to be arrested for blasphemy. *The First Temptation of Christ* begins with Jesus returning home for his 30th birthday with an effete companion, Orlando. God, who Jesus has been told is his uncle Vittorio, is still mooning after Mary, who gets caught sneaking a joint. Nearly 2 million Brazilians signed a petition asking Netflix to ban the show, and Eduardo Bolsonaro, lawmaker son of President Jair Bolsonaro, tweeted that it was "garbage." Fábio Porchat, who plays Orlando, said he thought of the show as a "Christian fairy tale," noting that it ends with Jesus choosing God over the Devil.



Jesus and Orlando

Vatican City

No more secrecy? In what the Vatican is calling an "epochal" change, Pope Francis this week ruled that "pontifical secrecy" no longer applies to the sexual abuse of minors. The church previously kept secret its own investigations of sexual abuse cases, in order, it said, to protect the privacy of victims and the reputations of the accused priests. Now files from those investigations can be given to law enforcement or government investigators upon request—potentially revealing the names of thousands of suspected pedophiles. In Illinois alone, the Catholic Church is believed to have withheld the names of 500 pedophile priests. "At last, a real and positive change," tweeted Marie Collins, an Irish abuse survivor.



Francis: Opening up



Buenos Aires

Accused torturer faces trial: A former police officer accused of torture and crimes against humanity during Argentina's military dictatorship era was extradited to Buenos Aires this week, after working for decades as an academic in France. Mario Sandoval—nicknamed "Churrasco" ("Barbecue") for his alleged habit of electrocuting people on metal bed frames—fled to France after the junta fell in 1983 and lived openly under his own name. He became a professor of Latin American studies at the New Sorbonne University and worked as an adviser to former President Nicolas Sarkozy. Sandoval, 66, is suspected of links to the murders of hundreds of people, but the extradition charges relate to just one: the 1976 disappearance of architecture student Hernán Abriata. Sandoval says all the accusations against him are lies.



Sandoval: Extradited

Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan

Militia boss escapes: Afghan government forces turned the city of Mazar-i-Sharif into a war zone this week, pounding the compound of a wanted ethnic Uzbek warlord with rocket-propelled grenades and fire from helicopter gunships. The assault killed at least eight members of Nizamuddin Qaisari's militia, but the warlord himself sneaked away. Qaisari is a former police chief who used his hundreds-strong militia to extort money from citizens. Arrested last year, he either escaped or was freed and relocated to Mazar-i-Sharif, a major economic hub. His latest getaway was a humiliation for President Ashraf Ghani, who this week publicly ordered the arrest of another strongman, Gen. Zemarai Paikan. Just hours later, Paikan posted a photo of himself on Facebook, posing in front of the Eiffel Tower.



Looking for Qaisari

Nagoro, Japan

Village of dolls: With birth rates falling and young people decamping for cities, many rural regions across Japan are seeing their populations dwindle and gray. The remote village of Nagoro is now entirely childless, so one woman has made hundreds of life-size cloth dolls to keep elderly residents company. Tsukimi Ayano, 70, created some 350 dolls that decorate the town, whose human population is fewer than 30—down from 300 when Ayano was young. The dolls sit in the empty school and in front of houses and stand propped in gardens. “I wish there were more children because it would be more cheerful,” Ayano told *The New York Times*. “So I made the children.”



Inside the schoolhouse

Islamabad

Musharraf sentenced to death: A Pakistani court this week sentenced the country's former military dictator, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, to death for treason for his 2007 decision to suspend the constitution and impose a state of emergency. Musharraf seized power in a bloodless 1999 coup and became hugely unpopular for his support of the U.S. War on Terror. He sparked massive protests by firing members of the judiciary when they opposed him, including the Supreme Court's chief justice, and was toppled in 2008. The still-influential Pakistani military said in a statement the verdict caused soldiers “a lot of pain and anguish,” and insisted that a man who served his country for decades “can surely never be a traitor.” Even if the sentence is upheld, Musharraf, 76, is unlikely to be executed. He is seriously ill and lives in self-imposed exile in Dubai.

Beirut

Violent protests: Dozens of people were injured in clashes between security forces and anti-corruption protesters in Beirut this week, with riot police hitting demonstrators with tear gas, water cannons, and rubber bullets and being pelted in return with rocks and firecrackers. It was some of the most violent unrest since protests began in Lebanon two months ago, sparked by public anger at the ruling elite's self-enrichment amid the country's worst economic crisis in decades. Lebanon's infrastructure is crumbling, garbage is piling up in the streets, and blackouts occur daily. Shiite groups in particular protested this week—torching cars and burning tires—after a video circulated online showing a Sunni Lebanese man cursing Shiites. The crowds ignored the calls of the Amal Movement, a Shiite political party, and the Shiite militant group Hezbollah to stop protesting and go home.

Sydney

Searing heat: Australia experienced its hottest day on record this week, with the national average temperature hitting a sweltering 105.6 degrees. Some places were much hotter, including the town of Ceduna in South Australia, where the mercury shot up to nearly 114 degrees. The record highs come as the nation continues to battle an extreme drought and raging bushfires that have cloaked Sydney in smoke. Suffering Australians lambasted Prime Minister Scott Morrison for taking a pre-Christmas vacation in Hawaii, with many slamming Morrison on social media with the hashtag #WhereTheBloodyHellAreYou, a former tourism slogan. Climate scientists say Australia's soaring temperatures are linked to climate change, and activists have criticized the conservative Morrison for his refusal to wean Australia from its dependence on coal.



Sydney: Choking on smoke

Harare, Zimbabwe

Second lady accused: The estranged wife of Zimbabwean Vice President Constantino Chiwenga has been charged with attempting to murder her husband. Prosecutors say former model Marry Mubaiwa, 38, tried to prevent a seriously ill Chiwenga, 63, from going to the hospital. When he was admitted, Mubaiwa allegedly ordered his bodyguards to leave the room, unhooked his IV, and tried to drag him from the ward before being stopped by security. Mubaiwa is also accused of spiriting nearly \$1 million out of the country to pay for luxury cars and property and of trying to fraudulently obtain an upgraded marriage license that would entitle her to more of her soon-to-be-ex-husband's assets. She denies the allegations. Chiwenga played a key role in forcing President Robert Mugabe to resign in 2017 after 37 years in power.



Mubaiwa: Attempted murder?

Grant's troubled inspirations



Richard Grant has no shortage of material to draw on when he plays an emotionally damaged character, said Chrissy Iley in *The Times* (U.K.). The actor was born in the tiny southern African nation of Swaziland, to a father who was a British colonial official—and a raging alcoholic. His father thought little of Grant's acting ambitions. When Grant returned from watching *A Clockwork Orange* wearing a fake eyelash like the film's main character, his drunken dad was so angry that he put a gun to Grant's temple, fired once...and missed. "He was also infuriated that I'd emptied a crate of Scotch down the sink," says Grant, 62. His mother also traumatized him. At age 10, he woke up in the back seat of the family car to witness her having sex in the front seat with his dad's best friend. Grant re-created that scene in his directorial debut, 2006's *Wah-Wah*, which was based on his childhood. The affair led to his parents' divorce and his father's drinking. "He died at 52 of alcoholism and a devoted love of my mother. He drank to numb the pain." At the funeral, a Swazi priest jumped into the grave to try to raise his father from the dead. "I put that in *Wah-Wah*," Grant says, but he cut it after initial screenings. "People said it was too extreme."

The dream bridesmaid, for hire

Jen Glantz is there for women on the biggest day of their lives—for about \$2,000 a wedding, said Luke Winkie in *Vox.com*. The 31-year-old entrepreneur has been a professional bridesmaid since 2015, working dozens of ceremonies each year around the country. She's a dear friend for a day, *not* a wedding planner. "I'm not going to be able to pick your flowers or taste your cake with you," says Glantz. Instead, she specializes in energizing the dance floor, distracting problem relatives, and above all, comforting the bride. "You're running around putting fires out. You'll clock 30,000 steps in one wedding." Some clients have suffered a recent falling-out with a bridesmaid and need a quick fill-in, while others just don't have enough close friends. About three-quarters of the time, brides ask Glantz to make up a fake name and backstory—she usually claims to be a friend from some obscure hobby. Glantz launched her company, Bridesmaid for Hire, in 2015 after serving as a civilian bridesmaid in her 20s for numerous friends. "That got me thinking that if I could do this for friends, I could do it for the wedding industry." She now has a team of pro bridesmaids but rejects any applicants who emphasize how much they love to party. "It's not a party," Glantz says of the job, "it's an emotional roller coaster."



How Hill became a victim of 'cyber-exploitation'

When Katie Hill entered Congress in January, the freshman Democrat seemed destined for great things, said Molly Jong-Fast in *TheDailyBeast.com*. But just 10 months later, the telegenic 32-year-old from a California swing district was forced to resign. A right-wing news site had published intimate photos revealing her and her husband's affair with a female campaign aide, and the House had opened an ethics investigation. An unlikely casualty of the #MeToo movement, the openly bisexual Hill says her career was wrecked by a "bitter jealous man": her soon-to-be-ex-husband, Kenny Heslep. Before the 2018 election, Hill says she decided to divorce her "toxic" spouse. "He threatened that if I tried to leave, he would ruin me. I had to anyway." She claims Heslep took and posted nude photos online without her knowledge—a charge he denies. The images were then picked up by the news site. While some commentators have called Hill a victim of revenge porn, she describes her experience as "cyber-exploitation," because "revenge porn implies you did something wrong and, yeah, that you made porn." Yet Hill can't help but feel shame. "It's hard for me to reconcile how I was, and I think still am, a role model for some young women."

In the news



■ **Harvey Weinstein** thinks he's a feminist trailblazer, despite sexual misconduct accusations from 80-plus women. "My work has been forgotten," the disgraced producer told the *New York Post* last week. "I made more movies directed by women and about women than any filmmaker." Weinstein, 67, cited the \$10 million his studio paid Gwyneth Paltrow for the 2003 film, *View From the Top*, claiming it was more than any man was paid by an independent studio at the time. "I did it first," Weinstein said. "I pioneered it." Days earlier, Weinstein and his bankrupt

studio reached a deal to settle dozens of civil lawsuits for \$25 million. Eighteen alleged victims would split \$6.2 million, with the rest divided among other cases. It would be paid by an insurance company, not Weinstein, who would not be required to admit wrongdoing. He goes on trial on multiple counts of rape and sexual assault on Jan. 6.

■ **Mongolia** appears to have given **Donald Trump Jr.** special treatment after he killed an endangered sheep on an August hunting trip, *ProPublica.org* reported last week. President Trump's eldest son shot a red deer and an argali—a giant sheep known for its 6-foot curved horns. He was granted an extremely rare permit to kill the sheep only after he'd left the mountainous region. Mongolia depends on aid from the U.S. to keep neighbor China at bay, and Trump Jr.—who

was joined on his nighttime hunting expedition by government security officers and five American men described as bodyguards or Secret Service agents—met afterward with Mongolian President Khaltmaagiin Battulga. Wealthy Westerners can buy permits for up to \$50,000 to kill argali.

■ The New York Giants released star cornerback **Janoris Jenkins** last week after he shrugged off calling a fan "retard" on Twitter. In response to a tweeted question from the fan about the Giants' disastrous season, Jenkins, 31, replied, "I can only do my job... retard." He apologized, but insisted the word isn't a slur for people with a developmental disability. "That is a slang I use back with my homeboys in the hood," he said. Jenkins, who's from Pahokee, Fla., has been picked up by the playoff-bound New Orleans Saints.

The meaning of Hanukkah

Once a minor holiday for observant Jews, Hanukkah has become a major celebration in the U.S. Why?

What is Hanukkah?

Hanukkah commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem after a successful Jewish revolt against the Seleucid Empire in 160 BCE. The Seleucid dynasty, founded by one of Alexander the Great's generals after the Macedonian Empire was divided upon Alexander's death, spread Greek culture, ideas, and religion throughout the ancient Middle East. The Jews were initially granted a measure of autonomy within this empire. But in 175 BCE, King Antiochus IV Epiphanes instituted a program of forced assimilation in Judea, outlawing the Jewish faith and desecrating the Temple by sacrificing a pig and erecting an altar to Zeus. After a years-long campaign of guerrilla warfare, Jewish rebels known as the Maccabees defeated the Seleucids. Tradition holds that when the Maccabees recaptured the Temple, there was only one vial of undefiled olive oil, enough to light the seven lamps of the Temple menorah for just one day. Miraculously, the lamps kept burning for eight days, enough time to press and consecrate more oil. That's why Hanukkah is celebrated for eight days and is called the Festival of Lights.

How is it celebrated?

Hanukkah begins on the 25th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev, which falls on Dec. 22 this year. But because the Hebrew calendar is on a different cycle than the Gregorian calendar, the holiday can begin anywhere from late November through December. Households gather together each night to light today's menorah, a nine-branched candelabrum, while saying special blessings. The *shamash*, or "attendant" candle, is lit first and used to light one other candle on the first night of Hanukkah, with one more candle added every night. Dreidel, a game of chance with a spinning top, is often played after the candles are lit, with players seeking to win a small number of coins, nuts, candies, or trinkets. Instead of actual money, foil-covered chocolate coins called *gelt* are often used. Each side of the top is inscribed with a Hebrew letter—*nun*, *gimel*, *hei*, and *shin*—with the letters standing for "a great miracle happened there."

Is Hanukkah a major holiday?

For most of Jewish history, Hanukkah was considered a minor festival. The Hanukkah story does not appear in the Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible, which is the basis of the Christian Old Testament. Unlike biblically established holidays such as Passover and Yom Kippur, Hanukkah has no special dietary restrictions, and work is still permitted. The book of 1 Maccabees, which was written around 100 BCE, tells the story of the Maccabean Revolt and the eight-day celebration of the rededication of the Temple. But it does not describe the



Children are often asked to light the candles.

miracle of lights, which first appears in writing nearly 600 years after the Maccabean Revolt, in the collection of Jewish laws and teachings called the Talmud. Some historians believe Hanukkah celebrations evolved alongside other winter solstice festivals incorporating fire and light amid the darkest days of the year. "Although Hanukkah today is one of the most popular and recognizable of Jewish holidays in the minds of non-Jews, this is only a relatively recent development," writes Tatjana Lichtenstein, director of the Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Texas. "For centuries, Hanukkah remained less religiously and culturally significant than almost any other of the Jewish holidays."

When did that change?

Hanukkah began to take on more importance in the mid to late 19th century, amid large-scale Jewish immigration to the U.S. Many Jewish immigrants embraced American customs as a way of fitting in, including Christmas, which during the Victorian Era had begun its transformation into the highly commercialized holiday we know today. Alarmed by the number of Jewish families decorating Christmas trees and waiting for Santa Claus, religious leaders started to play up Hanukkah as an alternative. Cincinnati-based Reform Rabbis Max Lilienthal and Isaac M. Wise are credited with popularizing Hanukkah by developing special Hanukkah synagogue services focused on children, with candle-lighting, songs, and gift-giving, which they promoted in the Jewish press. "We must do something, too, to enliven our children," Lilienthal wrote in an editorial in 1876. "[They] shall have a grand and glorious Chanukah festival nicer than any Christmas festival."

How has Hanukkah evolved since then?

Hanukkah has become one of the most widely observed Jewish holidays in the U.S. Because it does not involve many of the strict religious requirements of other holidays, it's become a way for secular Jews to express their heritage and identity during the holiday season. It is also popular in the growing number of interfaith households, which celebrate both Hanukkah and Christmas. Hanukkah has become a powerful public symbol of religious freedom. The New York-based Hasidic movement Chabad-Lubavitch promotes public menorah lightings around the world, including the National Menorah in Washington, D.C. Hanukkah has also been growing in popularity in Israel, although it is not a national holiday. Hanukkah is "a minor holiday that America has elevated into something much more," says Josh Plaut, head rabbi at the Reform Metropolitan Synagogue in New York City. "Jews have been part of that magnification of Hanukkah. It suits our purposes."

The commercialization of Hanukkah

Hanukkah sparks a seasonal debate in America over whether it's become *too* much like Christmas. Kitschy products such as the Elf on a Shelf have found counterparts in the Mensch on a Bench and the Maccabee on the Mantel. Kosher foods manufacturer Manischewitz sells Hanukkah House kits that use vanilla cookies instead of gingerbread and come with blue and white icing. The Hallmark Channel this year added two Hanukkah-themed movies to its lineup of nonstop Christmas fare. "In New York you cannot go into a shop without seeing a menorah next to the Christmas tree, so people tend to think they are related, and Hanukkah is easily obscured by the holiday spirit," said Adam Goldmann, a freelance journalist now living in Germany. "Here, I feel free to enjoy Hanukkah for what it really is, a secondary Jewish holiday. There's no commercial aspect whatsoever."

The FBI's abuse of surveillance

David Garrow
The Wall Street Journal

"Every American who cares about civil liberties" ought to be deeply alarmed by the Horowitz report, said David Garrow. In his investigation of the roots of the Russia probe, the Justice Department's inspector general, Michael Horowitz, has shredded the credibility of the infamous Steele dossier and proven that this "shoddy work" played what he called "a central and essential role" in helping the FBI obtain warrants to surveil former Trump campaign aide Carter Page. Steele, a former British intelligence agent who was paid by Democrats to generate the dossier, admitted to the FBI that one of his two top sources for information from Russia—including salacious claims about Trump—was a "boaster" who "may engage in some embellishment." Steele's second major source later told the FBI that Steele had "misstated or exaggerated" his statements and given rumor and hearsay more credibility than they deserved. Nonetheless, Horowitz found, the FBI kept using the dossier to renew search warrants against Page, which the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court rubber-stamped. These findings raise troubling questions about the FBI's "unchecked" ability to target American citizens for surveillance. Next time, the target could be anyone.

Ripping off his own charity

Jack Holmes
Esquire.com

As "a sign of how far gone we are," Americans are just shrugging off the fact that the president of the United States has admitted he was stealing from his own charity, said Jack Holmes. Last week, New York state officials announced that President Trump had paid \$2 million in a court-ordered judgment for using the Trump Foundation for personal gain—but amid the nonstop noise of the Trump circus, that news "barely made a splash." People saw the headline and thought, "Well, yeah, of course Donald Trump ran a crooked charity." But we really should be appalled. With funds that donors contributed for firefighters' widows, veterans, and other good causes, Trump illegally paid more than \$250,000 to settle lawsuits against his for-profit businesses; bought a \$20,000, 6-foot portrait of himself; and funneled millions into his own 2016 campaign events. The grift goes back as far as 1989, when he used \$7 of the foundation's money to pay Don Jr.'s Boy Scout initiation fee. Just think about that: "seven dollars," from "a self-styled Rich Guy." Any other politician would be destroyed for such outrageous corruption, but Trump "can just brazenly lie about it." Even his supporters know he's a crook, and simply don't care.

America's third party is under 30

Derek Thompson
TheAtlantic.com

Young progressives are a "third party trapped in a two-party system," said Derek Thompson. Radicalized by the Great Recession and deeply skeptical of capitalism, young Americans "have veered sharply to the left." It's not hard to see why. Americans 55 and older make up less than one-third of the population but own two-thirds of the nation's wealth. Americans under the age of 40, on the other hand, have less income and wealth than young people of previous decades and are struggling with soaring housing costs, college debt, and anemic salaries. In a 2018 study, 95 percent of young progressives said that "some people's situations are so challenging that no amount of work will allow them to find success." They want the government benefits now primarily focused on older Americans—such as Medicare and tax write-offs for mortgages and capital gains—to be extended to the entire population. Those positions divide young leftists not only from Republicans but also from older Democrats, who make up nearly 60 percent of all primary voters. For now at least, young progressives are a distinct minority, and can't win a national election on a platform of "generational warfare."

Viewpoint

"I'm experiencing democracy grief. When I contemplate the sort of illiberal oligarchy that would await my children should Donald Trump win another term, the scale of the loss feels so vast that I can barely process it. Lately I've noticed, and not just in myself, a demoralizing degree of fear, even depression. You can see it online, in the self-protective cynicism of liberals announcing on Twitter that Trump is going to win re-election. To those who recognize the Trump administration's official lies as such, the scale of dishonesty can be destabilizing. It's a psychic tax on the population, who must parse an avalanche of untruths to understand current events."

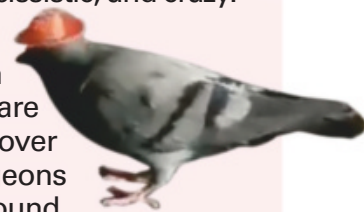
Michelle Goldberg in *The New York Times*

It must be true... I read it in the tabloids

■ A dentist in Alaska is on trial for allegedly removing a patient's tooth while standing on a hoverboard. Seth Lookhart carried out the procedure on Veronica Wilhelm while she was heavily sedated, and she was shocked when investigators showed her a video that Lookhart made showing him standing on the self-balancing, two-wheel scooter as he worked on her, while boasting that it was "a new standard of care." He was subsequently charged with reckless endangerment. "I don't have anything bad to say about taking out my tooth," said Wilhelm when they met in court. "I just think that what you did was outrageous, narcissistic, and crazy."

■ Animal rescuers in Las Vegas are perplexed over several pigeons spotted around town wearing small red cowboy hats. "At first, I was like, Oh, my god, that's cute!" said Mariah Hillman of Lofty Hopes pigeon rescue. "Then I was, Wait a minute, how did they get those hats on there? Did they glue them?" Hillman's group is trying to round the birds up so the hats can be removed.

■ Residents in a Utah county are facing years of extraordinarily high taxes after a clerical error overvalued a single residence by almost \$1 billion. Wasatch County officials theorized that the "horrific" mistake occurred when a staffer dropped a phone on a keyboard while logging assessments. The expectation that the owners of the \$987 million mansion—actually a \$300,000 house—would pay about \$6 million more than they were supposed to resulted in an artificially low tax rate for everyone else. The shortfall will have to be recouped over future years. "An abnormality of almost \$1 billion is a big deal," said County Manager Mike Davis, "and it should have been caught."



A man with a beard and short brown hair is standing on a dirt path in a park-like setting. He is wearing a blue sleeveless athletic shirt with a small 'S' logo on the chest, dark blue athletic shorts with a small 'S' logo on the left leg, and dark blue Skechers sneakers with white soles. He has his hands on his hips and is looking off to the side. The background is a blurred green landscape with trees and a path.

SKECHERS
GO WALK
5TM

**WALKING HAS NEVER
BEEN SO COMFORTABLE**

COMFORT PILLAR
TECHNOLOGY™

**MACHINE
WASHABLE**

AIR DRY

SKECHERS
AIR COOLED
GOGA MAT™

SKECHERS.COM

GERMANY

Merkel's warning to Germans

Nico Fried
Süddeutsche Zeitung

After 14 years in office, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has finally visited Auschwitz, said Nico Fried. Merkel has made official visits to other Nazi death camps and she has traveled to the Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem four times. But it wasn't until earlier this month that she laid a wreath at Auschwitz, where more than 1 million Jews died in the Holocaust. There, she announced Germany's second gift of \$67 million to maintain the memorial. "Remembering the crime, naming the perpetrators, and honoring the victims with dignity is our responsibility," said Merkel, who will leave office in 2021. "Being aware of this responsi-

bility is at the heart of our national identity." These are strong words for Germans to hear, and they are more necessary now that "racism, hatred, and historical revisionism are spreading again." In June, a neo-Nazi killed German politician Walter Lübcke; in September, a white supremacist tried to massacre Jews in a synagogue in Halle on Yom Kippur, killing two bystanders when he couldn't get into the building. A survey this year found that 27 percent of Germans hold anti-Semitic beliefs, while 41 percent think Jews talk about the Holocaust too much. It's "never the wrong time" for a German leader to visit Auschwitz—but now was especially timely.

ITALY

The 'Sardines' who hope to turn the tide

Fabrizio Caccia
Corriere della Sera

Italy has a new protest movement aimed against former Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, said Fabrizio Caccia. They call themselves the Sardines, after the small fish known for schooling in great numbers. Alone, one sardine is no match for a "shark" like Salvini, whose anti-immigrant Lega party stands to make major gains in regional elections next month. But thousands together can make a difference. The group started as a flash mob in November. Salvini had organized a rally at Bologna's PalaDozza arena, and activist Mattia Santori sent out a call on social media hoping to get 6,000 people—more than the capacity of the PalaDozza—to stage a counterprotest nearby.

More than 15,000 turned up. The Sardine movement quickly spread to other cities and is now "ready for Phase 2." Last weekend, 35,000 activists gathered in Rome to plan their election activities. Santori declined to form a new party, urging supporters to instead vote for any existing leftist party. But the Sardines did unveil a list of demands for the government, asking for transparency and truth. Above all, they want to repeal the "Salvini Decree," the law that makes it easier to deport migrants. Grazia de Sario, leader of the Sardines chapter in Barletta, said the movement will "continue to fill the squares with our message of anti-fascism and anti-racism to stop Salvini."

United Kingdom: Johnson's big Brexit victory

"The worst of men" has been elected prime minister, said Polly Toynbee in *The Guardian* (U.K.). Blowhard Boris Johnson led his Conservative Party to a resounding victory in last week's national vote, which means his divorce deal to take Britain out of the European Union will almost certainly take effect on Jan. 31. Johnson is a congenital liar, "unfit in every way for any kind of office." Yet thanks to his promise that he would "get Brexit done" after three years of deadlock, his Conservatives went from being a minority government to one with a clear majority in the House of Commons, taking 365 of the 650 seats. The Left-wing Labour Party—which couldn't decide whether it was pro- or anti-Brexit—collapsed to 203 seats, a loss of 59 seats and its worst showing since 1935. It is a measure of how hated Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn is that a "sociopathic, narcissistic glutton for power" like Johnson was seen as the lesser of two evils.

Labour "wasn't merely defeated. It was crushed. Obliterated. Defenestrated," said James Bickerton in *The Daily Telegraph* (U.K.). And it was done in by "precisely the same people it arrogantly proclaimed to speak for." The working class plumped for the Conservatives over Labour by a stunning 13 percentage points. They disliked Corbyn personally, for his history of palling around with Irish and Palestinian terrorists. And they disdained his Marxist platform, which promised to soak the rich and nationalize railways, utilities, and internet services.



The prime minister celebrates his resounding win.

The prime minister's "exuberant personality" won this election, said *The Sunday Times* (U.K.) in an editorial. Boris inspired voters because he "exuded optimism on Brexit," in contrast to his predecessor, the dour Theresa May, who acted as if she were just trying "to make the best of a bad job." He also dumped the Conservatives' austerity agenda, promising to hire 20,000 more police officers and "to boost the NHS with 50,000 more nurses."

Despite Johnson's pledges, Brexit won't be done anytime soon, said *Le Monde* (France). The prime minister still needs to secure a trade agreement with the bloc. Johnson has floated a vision of the U.K. as a new Singapore, a global investment hub with low corporate taxes and few regulations. Yet if he abandons EU rules on labor and the environment, Brussels will slap punishing tariffs on British exports, crippling the U.K.'s economy. Boris will "have to choose between the Continent and the offshore" life. Can he do that and keep a deeply fractured Britain together? asked John Rentoul in *Independent.co.uk*. Scotland, which wants to stay in the EU, voted overwhelmingly for the Scottish Nationalist Party and could soon demand a new independence referendum. And Northern Ireland is being pushed closer to the Republic of Ireland, an EU member, by Johnson's divorce deal, which will create a de facto trade border between the province and the rest of Britain. Johnson "may be prime minister for a long time, but he also may be the last prime minister of the U.K."

India: Fury over anti-Muslim discrimination

A new Indian law that equates “citizenship with religion” and appears to discriminate against Muslims has sparked such violent protests that it may have to be withdrawn, said *The Times of India* in an editorial. The unrest began earlier this month in the northeastern state of Assam—where more than a third of the population is Muslim—and quickly spread across the nation. In New Delhi, police this week blasted protesting Muslim students with tear gas and rubber bullets and beat them with wooden sticks. Clearly, the Hindu nationalist government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi “miscalculated the intensity of the blowback” that the law would engender. The government insists the Citizenship Amendment Act is not discriminatory but in fact protects against “religious persecution,” said **Prabhash Dutta** in *India Today*. The law extends citizenship to Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Zoroastrian, and Christian migrants from three neighboring countries—Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan—that have Islam as a state religion. Non-Muslims are presumed to be discriminated against there, so India will continue to welcome them here. But Muslim migrants are not considered to have fled persecution and so aren’t entitled to amnesty. The act is already being challenged in court because some claim it violates the Constitution.

“The mask is off and the claws have been bared,” said **P. Chidambaram** in the *Financial Express*. Modi’s new law is just the latest step in a plot to further marginalize India’s 200 million Muslims—about 15 percent of the country’s population.



Protesters and police clash in the city of Lucknow.

His Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has always sought Hindu supremacy and recently promised to create a National Register of Citizens that will require all Indians to prove that they or their ancestors were living in India before 1971. Yet when Assam ran a pilot program last year, it found that many Indians lacked the necessary official documents. A shocking 4 million people—13 percent of the state’s population—were left off the citizenship rolls, many of them Bengali Hindu migrants from neighboring Bangladesh. So Modi’s party came

up with the Citizenship Amendment Act to grant amnesty to those Hindus. Muslims were left out because denying citizenship to India’s Muslims is the registry’s express purpose. Already, the government is building camps where it intends to house Muslims ahead of mass deportations.

This is simply democracy in action, said **Vivek Dehejia** in *Mint*. The BJP campaigned on the Citizenship Amendment Act, and its “thundering re-election victory” this spring can only be interpreted as an endorsement of the party’s agenda. And don’t think that the protests in Assam are some sort of principled defense of secularism. This is largely a display of “regional chauvinism.” Neither Muslims nor Hindus in Assam “welcome the legitimization of Hindu migrants from Bangladesh,” because they fear the migrants will take their jobs and change their community, and they may be right. India is still a democracy. Those who want to change the citizenship law “need to convince Indian voters.”

NIGERIA

Oil riches are making us poor

Editorial
The Punch

Oil has wrecked the Nigerian economy and is rendering our people destitute, said *The Punch*. Nigeria passed India last year to become the global capital of poverty, with 95 million of our 200 million people living on less than \$1.90 a day. If this trend is not reversed, the World Bank said in a report this month, then in only 10 years, fully a quarter of the world’s most impoverished people will be Nigerians. “This is mortifying.” Nigeria used to have a thriving and diverse economy. Three decades ago, this nation was the world’s No. 3 producer of rubber, cocoa, and textiles, and one of the largest producers of palm oil. But oil money—we are one

of the world’s top producers of crude—has made us lazy. Now we import many goods we once made ourselves, and the regions that hosted those industries have sunk into a “primitive dependence” on oil revenues doled out by the central government. If global gas prices drop, we’ll sink into recession and even more of us will “fall headlong into extreme poverty.” The World Bank prescription is clear: We need a “radical restructuring of the economy,” including the revival of domestic manufacturing and infrastructure. Without immediate action, our “hope of escaping from the clutches of poverty in the near future looks exceedingly bleak.”

LEBANON

Women are leading the charge

Nay Abi Samra
L’Orient Le Jour

The Lebanese woman has finally emancipated herself, said Nay Abi Samra, and “she is beautiful in her ferocity.” After decades of being submissive and decorative, she has put down her makeup kit and picked up a placard, leading the march against rampant corruption. The mass protests that began in October, triggered by a tax on the popular messaging service WhatsApp, have been led by women. They have organized, mobilized neighbors, and set up protest camps. Their very bodies are on the front line. Women form a human shield, inserting themselves between demonstrators and baton-wielding riot police. And when a cabinet

minister’s armed bodyguard threatened to open fire on protesters, it was a young woman who delivered a swift and punishing kick to his groin, a moment captured on a video that went viral around the world. It’s a revelation for someone like me, who grew up with a “free and strong mother” and always felt pity, even contempt, for the deferential, superficial women I saw around me. But now I see them all “screaming the cries of anger that I once expressed” before I moved abroad. Today’s Lebanese woman is standing up not only for democracy but also for her human rights. “She believes in her future”—and so do I.

Noted

■ After a big marketing push on social media, Mariah Carey's holiday staple "All I Want for Christmas Is You" hit No. 1 on the *Billboard* singles chart this week for the first time since it was released in 1994, with more than 45 million plays on streaming services in one week alone.

The New York Times

■ Nearly 250,000 fewer students enrolled in college this fall than a year ago, continuing a decline that has seen nationwide enrollment drop about 11 percent, or 2.3 million, since 2012. Researchers attribute the decline to low unemployment, the rising cost of college, and a falling national birth rate.

NPR.org



■ Russian state television has been gloating over President Trump's Oval Office photo with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, with Rossiya 1 airing a segment called "Puppet Master and 'Agent.'" On another show, TV host Vladimir Soloviev joked the Kremlin might have to "get another apartment in Rostov ready" if Trump loses the election, a reference to Viktor Yanukovich, the pro-Kremlin former president of Ukraine, who fled to Russia after he was ousted from power.

TheDailyBeast.com

■ More Americans are dying at home than in hospitals. In 2017, 30.7 percent of all deaths by natural causes occurred at the deceased's home, compared with 29.8 percent in hospitals.

The New York Times

Anti-Semitism: Redefined by Trump's order

President Trump's new executive order "will not protect anyone against anti-Semitism, and it's not intended to," said Masha Gessen in *New Yorker .com*. Last week the president instructed the Department of Education to withhold federal funds from colleges that fail to police anti-Semitism, with Judaism included for the first time as a protected class under the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The point of the order was to establish an "absurdly" broad definition of anti-Semitism to include opposition to the state of Israel or its policies, such as that voiced by the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement popular on some campuses. Under this new policy, criticism of the current Israeli government's policy of "apartheid" for Palestinians qualifies as hate speech. This "deeply authoritarian" formulation is already having its desired effect, said Jesse Singal in *NYMag .com*. Duke University and the University of North Carolina recently remade their joint Middle East studies program because the Trump administration decided it was biased against Israel. Do we really want the government to decide what speech is permitted about the heated Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

Jewish students deserve the same protection as other minorities, said Jonathan Marks in *CommentaryMagazine.com*. The surge of campus



Are BDS protests anti-Semitic?

anti-Semitism goes far beyond debating the Israel-Palestine conflict, with anti-Zionists attacking Jewish students simply for having a "favorable" view of Israel. A Jewish student at George Washington University recently described how peers taunt him for being an "apartheid enabler." That kind of hostility can't go "unchecked," said John Podhoretz in the *New York Post*. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act denies federal funding to institutions that discriminate on the basis of race or national origin. It should apply to Jews too: We "occupy a unique status" as members of a faith, "an ethnicity," and "a tribe." Unfortunately, liberal Jews blinded by their Trump hatred attacked him for this "act of solidarity."

Solidarity? asked Clarence Page in the *Chicago Tribune*. Days before signing this order, Trump called Jewish businesspeople "brutal killers" and "not nice people at all," and said they had to support him, even if they don't like him, to protect their "wealth." Portraying Jews as greedy, unethical businessmen is about as anti-Semitic as it gets. Trump may support Israel, but under his presidency white-supremacist groups have flourished and incidents of anti-Semitism are on the rise. Reasonable people may ask: "Could President Trump be charged under his own executive order?"

Porn: Should the government ban it?

"Of all the stats that keep parents up at night, the one that haunts me most often is this: My toddler son is likely to encounter internet porn before puberty," said Sohrab Ahmari in the *New York Post*. So, I was heartened when four Republican members of Congress this month sent a letter to Attorney General Bill Barr urging him to start enforcing America's long-dormant obscenity laws and make prosecuting pornographers a "criminal justice priority." Young people increasingly learn about sex through online porn, warping their idea of sexuality and instilling in them violent and degrading attitudes toward women. For many, it becomes an all-consuming addiction. And "given the billions of videos and images" now available online, there is no way viewers can tell if the performers they are watching were "trafficked, coerced, or otherwise exploited."

"Social conservatives should be careful what they wish for," said Casey Given in *Washington Examiner.com*. Handing the government the power to ban or restrict access to things you don't like almost always backfires. It's easy to imagine future Democratic administrations "deeming so-called hate speech from conservatives as also 'obscene.'" We conservatives shouldn't rely on big

government to fight porn. Churches and schools can do more to educate people about porn's negative effects, and families can pressure technology companies for stronger parental controls. Turning America "into a Christian version of Saudi Arabia" isn't conservative, it's "dystopian." Banning porn won't make it go away, said Elizabeth Nolan Brown in *Reason.com*. It would only drive it underground, into the hands of organized crime. Prohibition always fails.

The debate over pornography is actually a debate about "what conservatism even is," said Jane Coaston in *Vox.com*. Should conservatives focus on advancing personal liberty and free markets, even if it means easily accessible porn viewed by tens of millions every day? Or should the Right use government for remaking the culture to reflect traditional mores? Feeling empowered by the influence they wield within the Trump administration, social conservatives are arguing that libertarians' influence "has caused the Right to ignore moral questions and focus too much on economics as an indicator of national well-being." That disagreement leaves conservatives standing at a crossroads, with stakes that "are a lot bigger than they might seem."

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

the biggest Internet portal,
providing you various content:
brand new books, trending movies,
fresh magazines, hot games,
recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price

Cheap constant access to piping hot media

Protect your downloadings from Big brother

Safer, than torrent-trackers

18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages

Brand new content

One site



AVXLIVE • ICU

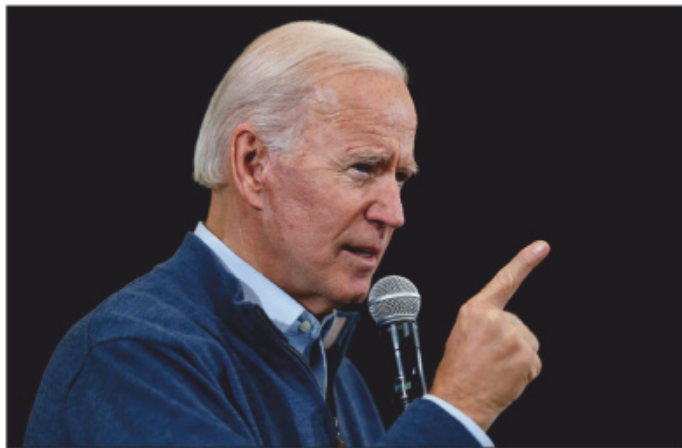
AvaxHome - Your End Place

We have everything for all of your needs. Just open <https://avxlive.icu>

Biden: Offering to serve just one term?

Democratic presidential front-runner Joe Biden has been “quietly indicating” he will not seek a second term if elected, said **Ryan Lizza** in *Politico.com*. Four of his advisers recently told me “it is virtually inconceivable” that the former vice president will run again in 2024, when he’ll be 82. Biden won’t make a public pledge to serve one term, because that would turn him into “a lame duck” the day he took office. Instead, he prefers “the strategic ambiguity” of leaks, while running as a transitional figure who’ll oust Donald Trump and pave the way for a new generation of Democrats.

It’s a smart strategy, said **Paul Waldman** in *The Washington Post*. Unlike some of the other Democrats in the race, Biden is offering not “a revolution, but a reset.” He does offer a menu of progressive policies, but his campaign is primarily predicated on the idea that he is the best person to defeat Trump and usher in a “return to stability.” To do that, he doesn’t “actually need a second term.” Tacitly promising to run for just one term gives Biden a “competitive advantage,” said **Nancy Gibbs**, also in *The Washington Post*. After “three years of news cycles that have left



Biden: He’d be turning 82 in 2024.

our teeth hurting, agencies ransacked, norms shattered, whole swaths of government demoralized, and strategic alliances cracked if not broken,” Americans are “yearning for normalcy.” That’s no doubt why Biden continues to lead in the polls despite his age and “serial stumbles” in debates and campaign events.

If Biden does run for one term, said **Jim Geraghty** in *NationalReview.com*, it will elevate his selection of a running mate to “extraordinary, perhaps even race-deciding importance.” Conventional wisdom would suggest that Biden needs “a younger and more progressive” running mate, like Stacey Abrams of Georgia, but for many Americans, that would nullify the allure of electing a centrist, “old-school, nonrevolutionary president.” I’d go instead with a female Democrat with a conservative voting record, like Arizona Sen. Kyrsten Sinema. As clever as this all sounds, said **Eric Levitz** in *NYMag.com*, Biden could be outsmarting himself. His tacit admission he’d be too old for a second term would open an uncomfortable question: If you’re too “concerned about your own stamina” to serve eight years, why should voters give you four?

.Org: Sold to the highest bidder

A symbol of “the old dream of an internet run in the public interest” has been sold, said **Michael Hiltzik** in the *Los Angeles Times*. The private equity firm Ethos Capital has agreed to pay the Internet Society \$1.135 billion for the .org domain registry, which supposedly exists for nonprofit organizations. The Internet Society is a nonprofit that plays a big role in managing and safeguarding internet standards and has been controlling the .org registry since 2002. It says it will use the proceeds of this sale as an endowment to fund its other internet work. Some 10 million organizations—such as the Red Cross, the Girl Scouts, and United Way—use a .org domain as “a badge of honor of noncommercial activity” and their intent to do good. The fear nonprofits have now is that Ethos Capital “will jack up” the \$10 annual fee or, worse, sell the right to censor their sites to third parties. Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web, called the sale “a travesty.”

ing that they have an altruistic or nonprofit mission; all that’s required is that they “fill out an online form and provide payment.” In fact, many groups use the suffix as a marketing tool to promote a “false association with credibility” and disguise an agenda that is “backed by corporate and political interests.” Craigslist, one of the world’s largest advertising sites, is a .org. Many hate groups use .org for their websites. The suffix “symbolizes neither quality nor trustworthiness.”

Still, there’s a big backlash against this sale, said **Richard Waters** in *FT.com*. Nonprofit advocacy groups are “up in arms” and are calling on the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), which oversees internet addresses, to block it. There’s still time to “save the .org and all it symbolizes,” said **Marc Rotenberg** in *TheHill.com*. When I helped the Internet Society take over the registry in 2002, “we believed there should be a space of the internet to promote noncommercial use.” Since then, Facebook and Google have only hastened the internet’s transformation into a virtual mall. Saving .org “may be the last opportunity to preserve the internet that many of us still believe in.”

Such indignation is misplaced, said **Sam Wineburg** and **Nadav Ziv** in *The New York Times*. Contrary to popular belief, organizations and companies can get a .org domain without show-

Wit & Wisdom

“If absolute power corrupts absolutely, does absolute powerlessness make you pure?”
Actor Harry Shearer,
quoted in *INews.co.uk*

“There is nothing new under the sun, but there are new suns.”
Novelist Octavia Butler,
quoted in *GoodReads.com*

“If there were no bad people, there would be no good lawyers.”
Charles Dickens, quoted in *Forbes.com*

“Americans have always been able to handle austerity and even adversity. Prosperity is what is doing us in.”
Journalist James Reston, quoted in *the Associated Press*

“The truth is always different from what anyone says out loud.”
Poet Stephen Dunn, quoted in *The Washington Post*

“Every thought is, strictly speaking, an afterthought.”
Philosopher Hannah Arendt, quoted in *Lapham’s Quarterly*

“Santa Claus has the right idea—visit people only once a year.”
Comedian Victor Borge, quoted in *Country Living*

Poll watch

■ **69%** of Americans think the economy primarily favors and helps the wealthy. **31%** of Americans say the economy is actually benefiting them; **46%** say it is hurting them and their families. **41%** of Americans often worry about paying bills.
Pew Research Center

■ **64%** of Americans plan to have a Christmas tree in their homes this year, but only **15%** say they intend to buy a real tree. **49%** plan to have an artificial tree.
YouGov



Pelosi with AOC and her mom at swearing-in

JANUARY

The New Year brings a new Congress to Washington. Republicans retain the Senate, with a 53-47 majority, but Democrats have control of the House for the first time since 2011, with a 36-seat majority. Rep. Nancy Pelosi is sworn in once again to be Speaker of the House, but the media lavish more attention on freshman Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. “AOC,” as she’s known, is a telegenic 29-year-old New Yorker and democratic socialist who soon introduces legislation for a “Green New Deal” that would quickly phase out fossil fuels by 2030 and guarantee a job to every American, all paid for by taxes on the wealthy. In the White House, Donald J. Trump begins the third year of his chaotic presidency in typically combative fashion: refusing to sign a spending bill unless Congress agrees to fund his controversial border wall and blaming Democrats for the resulting government shutdown. The polarized nation is divided again by images of a nonviolent staredown on the National Mall between a 16-year-old Kentucky teenager in a Make America Great Again hat and a Native American elder banging a drum.

FEBRUARY

The government shutdown, now the longest in U.S. history, ends in compromise. Trump agrees to a spending bill that allots \$1.375 billion for wall construction, far less than the \$5.7 billion he’d demanded, but somewhat more than the \$0 Speaker Pelosi had offered him. Elsewhere in Washington, the Senate confirms William Barr, 68, to be the new attorney general. Despite Barr’s expansive views on executive power, Democrats are cautiously hopeful that the career-long Washington insider is enough of an “institutionalist” to resist any effort by Trump to fire special counsel Robert Mueller. Mueller is in the second year of an investigation into contacts between the Trump campaign and Russia during the 2016 election. On Twitter, Trump routinely disparages Mueller’s probe as a politically motivated “WITCH HUNT!” Many Democrats, meanwhile, are convinced that Mueller’s findings will be sufficiently damning to see Trump impeached and removed from office.

MARCH

Mueller finishes his work and submits his long-awaited report to Barr, who quickly releases his own four-page summary. Mueller found no evidence that Trump or his team criminally “conspired” with Russia, Barr announces. The attorney general concedes that Mueller found he could not “exonerate” Trump of possible crimes in his attempts to obstruct the investigation, but says “I have concluded” that no obstruction occurred. As Democrats cry foul, demanding to see the full report, Trump revels in what he calls a “complete and total exoneration.” In Virginia, meanwhile, Paul Manafort, President Trump’s former campaign manager, is sentenced to 47 months in jail for bank fraud and tax evasion, with a federal judge later adding 43 months for conspiracy. In New Zealand, a white-supremacist gunman kills 51 people at two mosques in the city of Christchurch, livestreaming the massacre via a helmet-cam to Facebook. The crash of an Ethiopian Airlines passenger jet is the second disaster in five months involving a new Boeing 737 Max, and aviation authorities ground the aircraft until further notice. An investigation soon blames software problems for the crashes.



Mueller: Trump welcomed Russia's help.

APRIL

The Mueller report is finally released for public consumption, and it’s quite different from Barr’s summary. It now emerges that Mueller himself wrote to Barr after the summary’s release, complaining that the AG “did not fully capture the context, nature, and substance” of the full report. Mueller did indeed find no “illegal” conspiracy between Trump staffers and Russia, as Barr claimed, but the report details more than 100 furtive contacts, as well as the Trump campaign’s clear expectation and desire to benefit from Russian election meddling. As for obstruction of justice, Mueller lays out numerous instances of Trump dangling pardons, encouraging witnesses to lie or dictating false statements, and trying to fire Mueller himself. He declined to recommend prosecution, Mueller will later tell Congress, because of an internal Justice Department policy against indicting sitting presidents. The policy, Mueller says in the report’s guarded language, leaves only “constitutional processes for addressing presidential misconduct.” But House Democrats, wary of a backlash, are reluctant to launch impeachment proceedings. “I think impeachment’s too good for him,” Pelosi says.

MAY

As it becomes clear that Trump has survived Mueller’s Russia investigation, the field of Democratic candidates vying to depose him in 2020 expands to a historic size. As of May, sitting senators Bernie Sanders, Kamala Harris, Elizabeth Warren, Cory Booker, Amy Klobuchar, Kirsten Gillibrand, and Michael Bennet have all thrown their hats in the ring, along with a half-dozen former and current congressmen, including Beto O’Rourke of Texas, and a pair of mayors: New York’s Bill de Blasio and Pete Buttigieg, 37, mayor of South Bend, Ind., pop. 102,000. Leading the field, however, is Joe Biden, the former vice president, despite concerns among Democrats about his age, 76; his ongoing verbal gaffes; and his inability to excite the party’s progressive base. In Washington, President Trump’s blanket refusal to honor subpoenas sparks fresh talk of impeachment. “I think we’re at an inflection point,” said Democratic Rep. Ted Lieu.



Biden: Early front-runner

JUNE

In China, an estimated 2 million demonstrators take to the streets of Hong Kong, protesting a bill that would allow criminal extraditions to the Chinese mainland. The bill is seen as a threat to the semiautonomy of Hong Kong, whose residents enjoy civil liberties not afforded other Chinese citizens. In the U.K., Prime Minister Theresa May announces her resignation after repeatedly failing to persuade the British Parliament to approve a deal for leaving the European Union—the so-called Brexit demanded by voters in 2016. In the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea, President Trump becomes the first sitting U.S. president to set foot on North Korean soil, crossing the border to shake hands with murderous dictator Kim Jong Un, which Trump describes as a “great honor.”



A Hong Kong protester

JULY

Wealthy financier Jeffrey Epstein, 66, is arrested in New York on new charges of sex trafficking of minors. Epstein was convicted of similar offenses back in 2008, and his re-arrest raises questions about the lenience of his previous, 13-month jail sentence after prosecutors had identi-

fied 36 teenage girls he had abused. The owner of multiple mansions and a private Caribbean island, Epstein had cultivated a network of powerful friends, including Britain's Prince Andrew, former President Bill Clinton, and current President Donald Trump. In Britain, the colorful, ambitious Boris Johnson is elected leader of Britain's Conservative Party and becomes the nation's new prime minister. In the White House, President Trump places a phone call to Volodymyr Zelensky, newly elected president of Ukraine, with national-security officials listening and taking notes.



Mourning in El Paso

AUGUST

In El Paso, Texas, a 21-year-old man opens fire in a Walmart store, killing 22 people, most of them Mexican immigrants. The gunman had posted an online manifesto calling his actions "a response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas." Just 13 hours later, another troubled youth with a semi-automatic rifle and a 100-round drum magazine opens fire in Dayton, Ohio, killing nine people, including his own sister, and wounding 27 others in the space of only 32 seconds. In New York, Jeffrey Epstein is found dead in his jail cell, having apparently hanged himself, despite what was supposed to be round-the-clock surveillance. Also in New York, Greta Thunberg, a 16-year-old Swedish climate-change activist, arrives to much fanfare, having crossed the ocean on a zero-emissions sailboat. A bloody month concludes with more carnage, when a gunman speeds away from a traffic stop near Odessa, Texas, and shoots dead seven motorists at random before being killed by police.

SEPTEMBER

Greta Thunberg delivers a blistering speech to the United Nations. "We are in the beginning of a mass extinction," the teenager angrily tells the assembled world leaders, "and all you can talk about is money, and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!" The next day,



Thunberg: 'How dare you!'

Trump sarcastically tweets, "She seems like a very happy young girl," but he is soon distracted by other matters. Michael Atkinson, inspector general of the intelligence community, alerts House Democrats that he has received a whistleblower's complaint of "urgent concern" relating to President Trump's July 25 phone call with Ukraine's President Zelensky. With details of the call leaking, the White House releases a rough transcript, in which Zelensky asks to purchase more U.S. Javelin missiles, to help resist the encroachment of Russian forces, and Trump replies: "I would like you to do us a favor, though." Trump proceeds to ask Zelensky to launch a pair of investigations: one into a convoluted theory that Ukraine, not Russia, hacked the Democratic National Committee in 2016; and another into unfounded allegations that Joe Biden, while vice president, intervened to block investigations of a Ukrainian natural gas company where his son Hunter was a board member. Democrats are disgusted by Trump's blatant attempt to get a foreign country to manufacture dirt on his possible 2020 adversary, and Pelosi announces a formal impeachment inquiry into President Trump for his "betrayal of his oath of office, betrayal of our national security, and betrayal of the integrity of our elections."

OCTOBER

Insisting his conversation with Zelensky was a "perfect call," President Trump denounces the impeachment probe as a "coup" and orders all current and former administration officials to refuse to cooperate. But several former diplomats testify in defiance of Trump, and a fuller picture emerges of Trump's interest in Ukraine. The Zelensky call, it turns out, was preceded by Trump's order freezing \$391 million in congressionally allocated military aid to Ukraine and a months-long effort by Rudolph Giuliani, Trump's personal lawyer, to have Ukraine announce investigations into Democrats. Gordon Sondland, Trump's ambassador to the EU, admits telling Ukrainian officials that unless Zelensky publicly announced the investigations, the military aid would not be released. Meanwhile, Daryl Morey, general manager of the NBA's Houston Rockets, tweets and quickly deletes a message of support for the ongoing protests in Hong Kong. The outraged Chinese government cancels upcoming NBA games in China and suspends NBA sponsorship by Chinese firms. This prompts a series of craven statements from NBA officials and players, including superstar LeBron James—usually an outspoken champion of social justice—who chides

Morey for failing to consider how his comments could have harmed people, "not only financially but physically, emotionally, spiritually." In Syria, ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is killed in a raid by U.S. special forces. "Osama bin Laden was very big," acknowledges President Trump, but "this is a man who built a whole, as he would like to call it, a country, a caliphate."



Zelensky: No 'favor,' no Javelins

NOVEMBER

Impeachment hearings continue in the House, with a parade of diplomats confirming the existence of a secret, Trump-ordered effort to have Ukraine assist with the president's re-election campaign. One, David Holmes, recalls Sondland telling him that Trump "does not give a s--- about Ukraine" or its war with Russia, and only cares about "big stuff that benefits the president, like the Biden investigation." Biden himself, meanwhile, is still the Democratic front-runner, ahead of Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, although Pete Buttigieg tops the polls in Iowa and New Hampshire, the first two primary states. The rest of the field has thinned somewhat since the spring. But billionaire former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, 77, suddenly jumps into the race, expressing widespread Democratic anxiety that Trump would "eat alive" any of the other candidates in the 2020 election.

DECEMBER

Boris Johnson's Conservative Party wins big in the U.K. elections, all but guaranteeing that Britain will, finally, leave the European Union in 2020. In Washington, Democrats conclude their public impeachment hearings and draft two articles of impeachment accusing President Trump of "abuse of power" and "obstruction of Congress." The stage is set for a January trial in the Senate, though Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell does his best to tamp down suspense, assuring Fox News host Sean Hannity that "we all know how it's going to end. There's no chance the president's going to be removed from office."

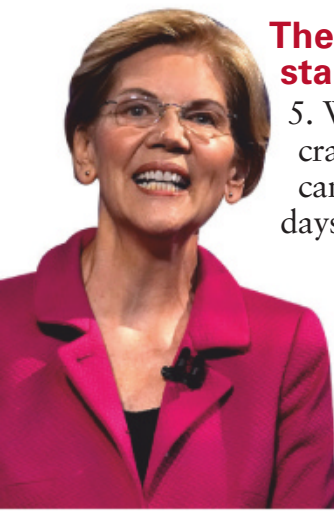


A victorious Johnson ran on 'Get Brexit done.'

Here are 40 questions to test your knowledge of the year's events

High crimes?

- 1. President Trump froze \$391 million in congressionally allocated military aid to Ukraine on July 3. On Sept. 11, the president allowed the aid to be released. What had happened the previous day?
- 2. When asked at a press conference if Trump had asked for investigations of Democrats in return for the release of the aid, this White House official said, "That's why we held up the money.... Get over it. There's going to be political influence in foreign policy." Name him.
- 3. Trump's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, traveled to Ukraine several times to search for dirt on Democrat Joe Biden, aided by two Soviet-born businessmen, Igor Fruman and Lev Parnas. Before they were indicted on campaign finance charges, they paid Giuliani \$500,000 to advise one of Parnas' companies. What was the apt name of the company?
- 4. Special counsel Robert Mueller's final report in the Russia investigation detailed at least 10 possible times Trump may have committed this type of crime, and referred the matter to Congress. What type of crime did Mueller point to?



Warren

The Democrats' stampede

- 5. Who was the first Democrat to declare his presidential candidacy, more than 1,100 days before the election?
- 6. Rank these senior citizens running for president from oldest to youngest: Donald Trump, Joe Biden, Michael Bloomberg, Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren.

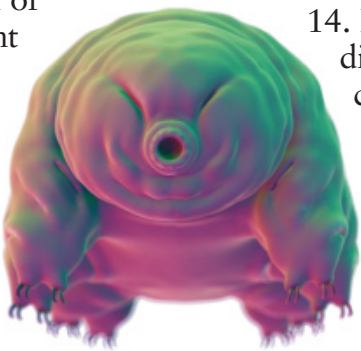


Giuliani and Parnas at Trump's Washington, D.C., hotel

- 7. Which Democratic presidential candidate attacked Hillary Clinton as "queen of warmongers" and the "embodiment of corruption, and personification of the rot that has sickened the Democratic Party for so long"?

So sorry

- 8. This congresswoman said she apologized "unequivocally" after criticizing U.S. support for Israel by saying, "It's all about the Benjamins, baby." (Benjamin Franklin is on the \$100 bill.)
- 9. This NBA team official said he did not "intend to cause any offense to Rockets fans and friends of mine in China," adding that he had learned to "consider other perspectives," after he tweeted out, "Fight for Freedom. Stand with Hong Kong."
- 10. This member of Congress resigned after admitting to having an improper relationship with a campaign staffer, and issued this apology: "To those who felt like I gave them hope in one of the darkest times in our nation's history, I'm sorry."
- 11. This elected official initially admitted he was one of two men in a photo in his medical school yearbook that showed one man wearing blackface and another a Ku Klux Klan costume, but later denied he was either.



A tardigrade

On Earth Two

- 12. Trump canceled a scheduled trip to Denmark, complaining that Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen had been "nasty," adding, "All she had to do is say, 'No, we wouldn't be interested.'" What was Frederiksen not interested in doing?
- 13. President Trump may have broken federal law when he used a Sharpie pen to alter an official government map of areas in Hurricane Dorian's path. What state did he include, although the official National Weather Service forecast said it was not in the path?

- 14. In what unexpected place did tardigrades—microscopic creatures also known as water bears that can survive in almost any environment—end up this year after an Israeli craft crashed?
- 15. During a business roundtable at the White House, what did Trump blame for making him look orange?

International

- 16. Match the protest-racked country with its initial cause of protests:
 - Chile • Sharp rise in fuel prices
 - France • Presidential corruption
 - Iran • Pension reforms
 - Haiti • Rise in subway fare
 - Hong Kong • Bill allowing defendants to be extradited for trial in rigged courts
- 17. China has forced more than 1 million members of this ethnic and religious minority into re-education camps, where they are compelled to study communist propaganda, pledge support to President Xi Jinping, and stop practicing their Muslim faith. What is this oppressed minority?

The year in covers



Name the news stories from 2019 that inspired these covers of *The Week*.

Whose Wit & Wisdom?



Abraham Lincoln



Comedian Hannah Gadsby



Author Ursula Le Guin



Mahatma Gandhi



James Baldwin

1. "Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced."
2. "Waldo should have to find himself like the rest of us do."
3. "The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."
4. "Nobody who says 'I told you so' has ever been, or will ever be, a hero."
5. "Books serve to show a man that those original thoughts of his aren't very new, after all."

18. This volatile South American country has had 190 coups, attempted coups, and revolutions in the 194 years since it gained its independence, and ousted its president in November over allegations of election fraud. Name the country and its ousted president.

19. A new Ebola outbreak has killed some 2,000 people in Congo since it began last year. This year, an epidemic of a different disease has killed nearly 5,000 people. What is it?

The arts

20. Name the gay country-rap crossover star whose hit single "Old Town Road" sparked debates about what constitutes "real" country music while it sat atop the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart for 19 weeks straight.

21. Martin Scorsese's acclaimed new film, *The Irishman*, brought together Robert De Niro, Al Pacino, and Joe Pesci for one last go at Mafia lore. When had the three actors last appeared together on screen?

22. Showrunners for *Game of Thrones* took some heat when



Thrones: Caffeinated

a stray 21st-century artifact appeared in a scene in the fantasy series' final season. What was the offending object?

23. Ali Stroker became the first wheelchair-using actor to win a Tony Award for her role in an unconventional revival of which Rodgers and Hammerstein musical?

24. Which 1970s-'80s music icon *didn't* write a memoir that was published in 2019?

- A. Elton John C. Debbie Harry
B. David Byrne D. Patti Smith

Business

25. Boeing installed a software system called MCAS on its new 737 Max jets to compensate for problems in the redesigned aircraft's aerodynamics. What did this software do that led to two fatal air crashes?

26. This was the year of the failed IPO. But one innovative food product soared 734 percent in the three months after it made its debut. What's the company?

27. Amazon backed out of a proposed deal to open a second headquarters in New York City after facing backlash from residents and local elected officials such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Where



Not a Prime member

did the company decide to locate its HQ2?

They said it

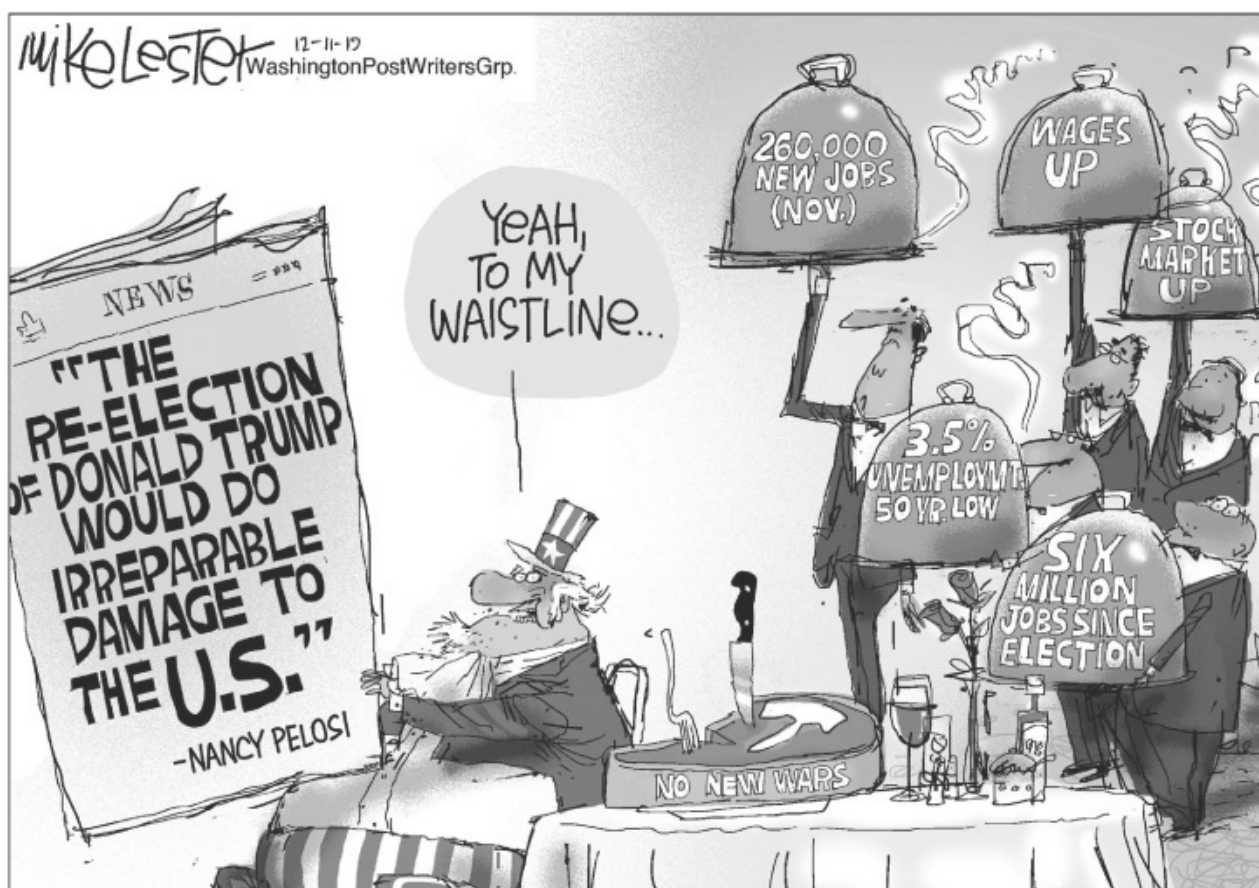
28. "Hell, yes, we're going to take your AR-15, your AK-47. We're not going to allow it to be used against our fellow Americans anymore."

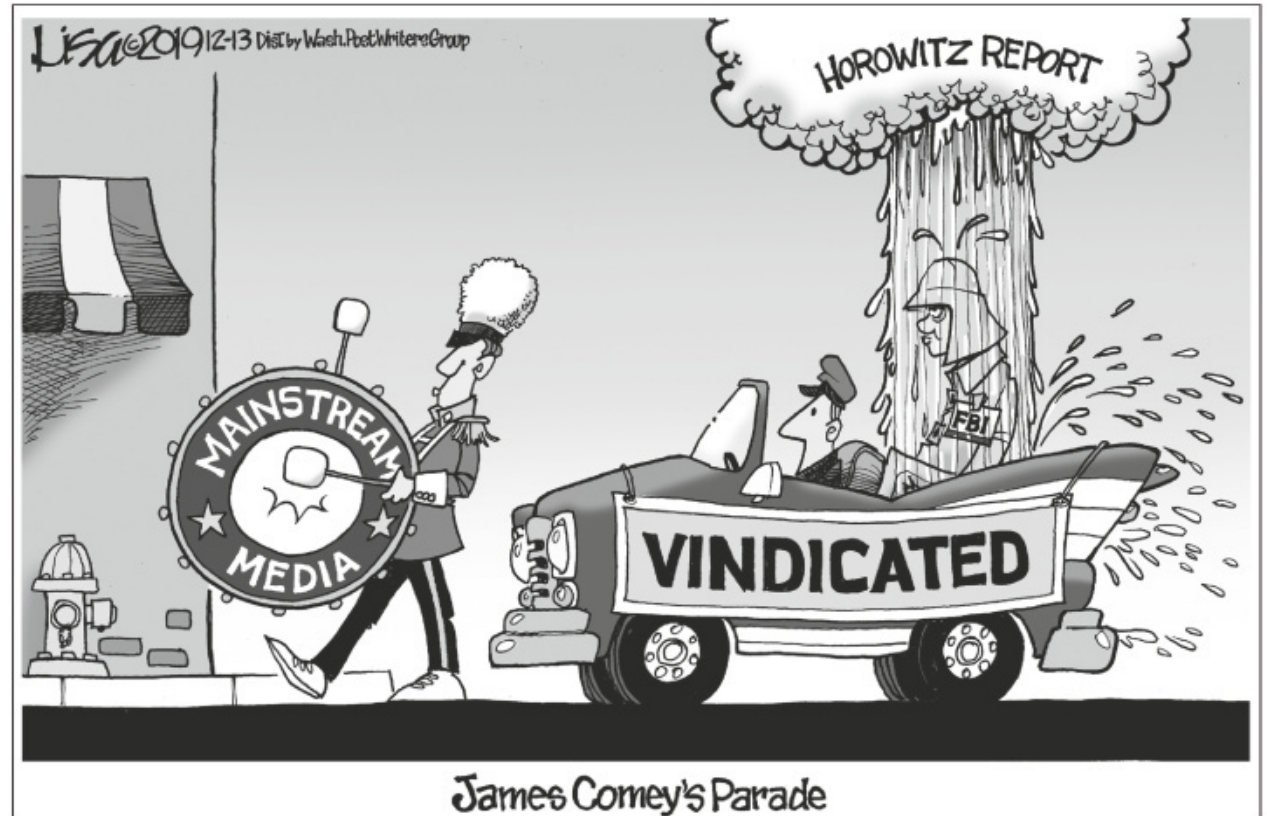
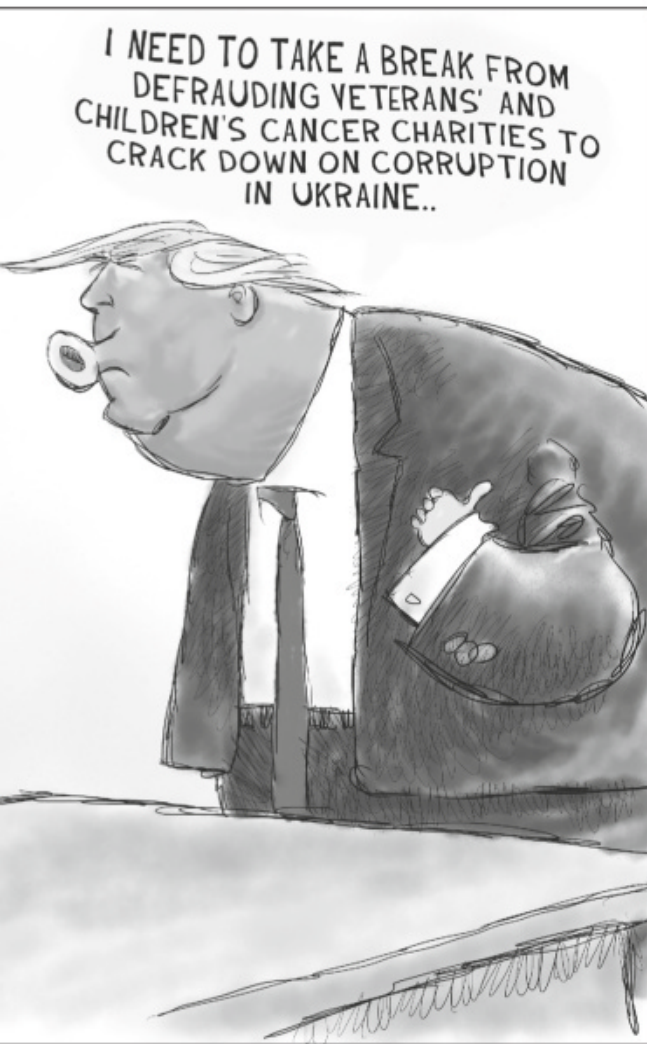
29. "We're not meddling in an election, we're meddling in an investigation, which we have a right to do."

30. "Everyone was in the loop. It was no secret."

31. "I'll always believe governing—and, quite frankly, life, for that matter—is about connecting, about connecting with people. That won't change. But I will be more mindful and respectful of people's personal space."

ANSWERS High crimes? 1. Congress requested the whistleblower report 2. Acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney 3. Fraud Guarantee 4. Obstruction of justice 5. Then-U.S. Rep. John Delaney of Maryland 6. Sanders (78), Bloomberg (77), Biden (77), Trump (73), Warren (70) 7 Rep. Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii 8. Rep. Ilhan Omar 9. Houston Rockets general manager Daryl Morey 10. Rep. Katie Hill 11. Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam 12. Selling Greenland to the U.S. 13. Alabama 14. The moon 15. New, energy-efficient light bulbs 16. Chile, rise in subway fare; France, pension reforms; Iran, sharp rise in fuel prices; Haiti, presidential corruption; Hong Kong, bill allowing defendants to be extradited for trial in rigged courts 17. Uighurs 18. Bolivia, Evo Morales 19. Measles 20. Lil Nas X 21. Never. No previous movie had brought all three mob-flick icons together 22. A take-out coffee cup 23. *OklaHoma!* 24. B. David Byrne **Business** 25. It tipped the plane's nose downward during takeoff 26. Beyond Meat 27. Arlington, Va. **They said it** 28. Former Democratic presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke 29. Rudy Giuliani 30. Ambassador Gordon Sondland 31. Joe Biden **Whose Wit & Wisdom?** 1. James Baldwin 2. Comedian Hannah Gadsby 3. Mahatma Gandhi 4. Author Ursula Le Guin 5. Abraham Lincoln **The year in covers** 1. Trump offers to buy Greenland 2. Special counsel Robert Mueller testifies before Congress 3. Pentagon urges military pilots to report UFO sightings 4. Attorney General William Barr issues his own four-page summary of the Mueller report





The way we were in 2019

We fumed over partisan politics and congressional inaction, but escaped through pizza and TV binges

How are we feeling?

Pretty furious. **67%** are angry about the way things are going in the country, **62%** say they feel more rage about current events than they did five years ago, and **58%** think their family, friends, and co-workers seem angrier, too (*Axios/SurveyMonkey*). **60%** believe American society is broken and **51%** that extreme partisanship now poses a danger to the country (*Ipsos*). While **70%** are proud to be American (*Gallup*), only **43%** think the U.S. is currently “great”—down 8 percentage points since 2017 (*Ipsos*). But there are causes for optimism. **55%** think the economy is excellent or good, up from **25%** in 2016 (*Gallup*), and **69%** are satisfied with their personal financial situation (*NBC News/Wall Street Journal*). Still, many fear the good times won’t last: **66%** expect we’ll sink into a recession in 2020 (*Fortune/SurveyMonkey*).

Whom do we blame for America’s problems?

Many point a finger at the commander in chief. **58%** believe President Trump is damaging the U.S. with un-presidential behavior and **54%** that he’s made America less respected around the world (*Washington Post/ABC News*). But some think he’s the greatest thing to happen to Washington in 150 years: **25%** of Americans, including **53%** of Republicans, say he’s a better president than Abraham Lincoln (*Economist/YouGov*). Other branches of government are viewed dimly. Only **22%** approve of the way Congress operates (*Reuters/Ipsos*), and **68%** say its members don’t work hard enough to deserve a summer vacation (*Economist/YouGov*).

How has society changed?

We’re more accepting in some ways. A record **67%** support same-sex marriage being legal (*CBS News*), and **76%** would be willing to vote for a well-qualified presidential candidate who happened to be gay—more than for an atheist, **60%**, or a socialist, **47%** (*Gallup*). But prejudice hasn’t disappeared. **56%** percent say being black hurts a person’s ability to get ahead in America, and **51%** say the

same about being Hispanic. Partisan enmity is growing: **63%** of Republicans believe Democrats are more unpatriotic than other Americans and **55%** that they’re more immoral, while **75%** of Democrats say Republicans are more closed-minded and **38%** that they’re less intelligent (*Pew Research Center*). Bridging that divide will be difficult: **87%** want political leaders who will compromise and find common ground, but **84%** also want them to stand up to the other side (*Georgetown University*).

What do we do to relax?

Zone out in front of a screen. **88%**

say they’ve lost sleep because they stayed up late to stream multiple episodes of a TV show and **50%** because they’ve played video games past bedtime (*American Academy of Sleep Medicine*). That might explain why **40%** of us generally don’t wake up feeling well-rested (*YouGov*). Many of us find escapism in fantasy: **62%** love superhero movies and **60%** *Star Wars* films. **13%** are such devoted fans that they’ve indulged in “cosplay” and dressed up as their favorite franchise character (*Morning Consult*). When it’s movie night at home, **38%** want to eat pizza—that’s more than any other food. But maybe don’t order a Hawaiian: **38%** believe that putting pineapple on a pie should be illegal (*Harris Poll*).

What are we scared of?

Lots. **48%** worry that they or a family member will become a victim of a mass shooting, up from **39%** in 2017 (*Gallup*), and **24%** have changed how they live their lives because of gun violence (*American Psychiatric Association*). Political partisanship has many panicking: **38%** worry that the “deep state” is working to overthrow President Trump (*Economist/YouGov*), and **31%** are afraid America will descend into civil war in the next five years (*Rasmussen*). Supernatural threats are also a concern. **45%** believe demons and ghosts exist and **13%** that vampires live among us. **14%** say they have a zombie apocalypse plan ready, just in case the dead rise up and start hunting for human flesh (*YouGov*).



Clockwise: Anger, cosplay, mourning, and comfort food

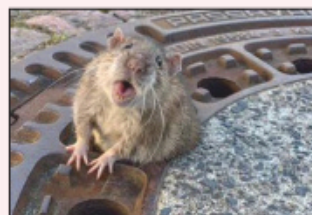
It must be true...The best of the tabloids in 2019

■ A long-distance runner who put the slogan “Jesus Saves” on his race bib had his life saved by a man named Jesus. Tyler Moon was competing at a 10-mile event in Minnesota when he suffered a cardiac arrhythmia. Nurse Jesus Bueno was running behind him and was able to perform CPR until paramedics arrived. In the hospital, Moon was stunned to learn that his rescuer was named Jesus. The message on his race bib, Moon said, “is pretty fitting.”

■ A Utah man has learned the hard way not to get too close to bison. Kyler Bourgeois, 30, was gored by a bison during a hike in Antelope Island State Park in June, suffering a cracked rib and collapsed lung. Believing his misfortune was “just a freak

accident,” Bourgeois recently returned to the park with a date, Kayleigh Davis, to jog and watch the sunset. But a bison charged and gored her too, puncturing her thigh. “I generally am not superstitious,” said Bourgeois, “but I have this weird feeling that the bison there really don’t like me.”

■ A brigade of eight firefighters needed 25 minutes to free a chubby rat that had gotten stuck in a manhole cover. Two children in Germany discovered the portly critter and phoned for help. “The rat had quite a lot of winter fat and got stuck at



its hips,” said rescuer Michael Sehr. Animal control’s Andreas Steinbach said that as the rat was freed, it “took a small look back,” as if to say, “Thank you very much, and yes, I know I have to diet.”

■ A Chinese computer programmer created a chatbot that sent realistic responses to his girlfriend’s daily barrage of 300 texts. Li Kaixiang said he developed the program to avoid hurting his girlfriend’s feelings while he was at work. But the girlfriend became suspicious when the responses to her texts came back nearly instantly. “Why are you responding so fast?” she asked. After revealing his ruse on social media, Li was inundated with requests from other men for the source code to his bot.

Stand Up.



Pictured: American Airlines team members surviving and co-surviving cancer with SU2C ambassador, Tim McGraw

Join American Airlines and Stand Up To Cancer in our mission to help make everyone diagnosed with cancer a long-term survivor. Donate \$25 or more and you'll receive 10 American Airlines AAdvantage® Miles for every dollar you give.

Visit StandUpToCancer.org/AmericanAirlines to learn more.



Big Tech: A coming war among the giants

“At the dawn of our new century, Google was still a search engine,” said John Herrman in *The New York Times Magazine*, “Amazon was best known for selling books, and Mark Zuckerberg was in high school.” Twenty years later, Google, Amazon, and Facebook have become superpowers, having “spent the past decade growing much faster than the rest of the economy.” The result is that almost all internet business now goes through them. What’s happened in the last 10 years, as well, is that the superpowers are running out of new users to sign up. This makes “the risk of open conflict among these companies in the future seem much higher.” In the next decade, Amazon might “weaponize its hosting services” or Google could flatly reject ad spending by a Chinese social app. “We’ve only known these empires during periods of expansion.” What happens if they go to war?

“I know it doesn’t feel like there are many things about tech to feel good about,” said Shira Ovide in *Bloomberg.com*, but there are reasons to be thankful. Not enough attention is paid to “the boring stuff,” like affordable smartphones or “software that can reduce airport delays.” Tech has also helped us unleash our creativity. Every day I see “a brilliant moment of distilled human storytelling” on YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, or Twitter. And the tech companies have made other companies try much harder.



Amazon now powers much of the internet’s traffic.

“Does anyone lament the days when cable companies could count on getting paid by 95 percent of U.S. households” no matter how bad their shows were?

What to do about tech poses a new problem for regulators, said Roger Parloff in *Yahoo.com*. “Enforcers now encircling the four” biggest companies include the Justice Department, the Federal Trade Commission, committees in both the House and Senate, and dozens of states’ attorneys general. But regulators have long looked to the consumer welfare

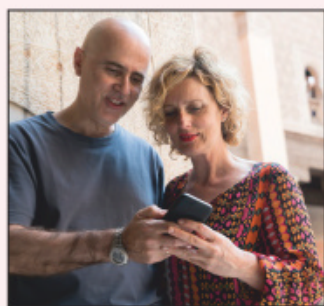
standard—how customers are affected—as the bar for deeming whether a business is anti-competitive. That standard might work in Big Tech’s favor. Consider how hard it might be “to mount a major case against Amazon,” because “its low retail prices” and convenience are so beloved by consumers, regardless of “how ruthlessly it expands.”

Indeed, “Amazon will be the most important company of the 2020s,” said Matt Rosoff in *CNBC.com*. In the past decade, Amazon’s e-commerce business has grown eightfold in the decade to a 2019 total likely to be close to \$280 billion. And it still has plenty of room to flourish. “The more powerful Amazon gets,” the more it becomes a “fat target” for lawmakers and regulators. The tech-lash, though, won’t stop Amazon from conquering the decade.

Innovation of the week

Google’s new “interpreter mode” makes it easier to strike up a conversation abroad,

said Julian Chokkattu in *Wired.com*. The company has “updated Google Assistant so that it supports translating languages in real time” on your phone. That means that if you’re traveling in a foreign country, “just say ‘Hey Google, be my [insert language here] translator’ and point your phone at the person you’re talking to.” The phone will automatically recite the translation aloud or type it out on screen. There’s no need to open an app—although an internet connection is required, which can be an issue when traveling. The technology isn’t perfect; “the whole experience isn’t speedy enough to sound like a normal conversation,” but the delay is only a second or two. The function currently supports 44 languages.



Bytes: What’s new in tech

Home security cameras hijacked

A hacker accessed a Ring security camera in a child’s bedroom and used the speaker function to tell her he was Santa Claus, said Elizabeth Wolfe and Brian Ries in *CNN.com*. The horrifying intrusion happened last week just days after Ashley LeMay of Mississippi installed the camera in her daughters’ room so she could watch them while working overnight nursing shifts. When her 8-year-old daughter, Alyssa, went to investigate “noises coming from her bedroom,” a man’s voice said, “I’m your best friend. I’m Santa Claus” and “continued to harass the girl, taunting her and encouraging her to destroy her room.” The company says that in most such cases hackers get the log-in details by stealing names and passwords from the Ring owner’s other accounts.

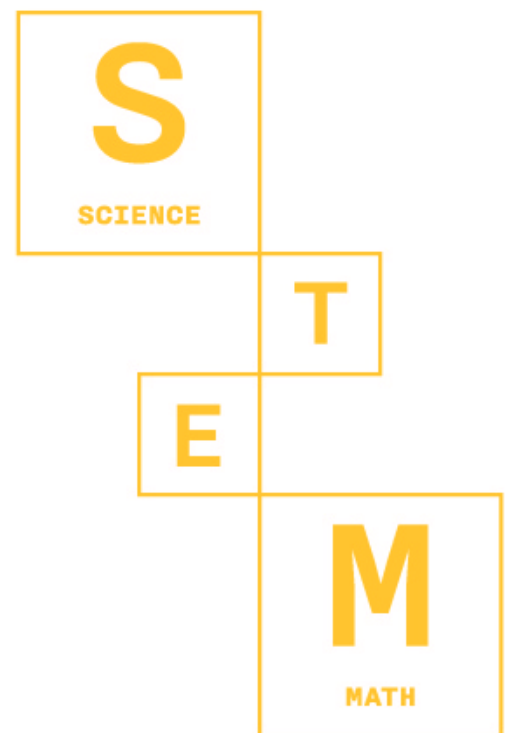
Paying for slow internet access

There’s a good chance your internet service provider is inflating the speed of your connection, said Shalini Ramachandran in *The Wall Street Journal*. Federal regulators have given broadband providers high marks for their performance. But in some cases, the companies persuaded the Federal Communications Commission to exclude the results from slower tests. Major broadband providers have

also been able to juice results, helped by the fact that they know “the FCC uses data from a specific time period, usually a month or two in the fall.” The FCC also sends them “lists of individual testers’ names,” making it possible for them “to make targeted upgrades that improve service for those households.” In the *Journal’s* own broadband tests, most users got only about half the speed they were promised.

Facebook won’t back down

Facebook rebuffed a request from Attorney General William Barr to stop its plan for encrypted messaging, said Tony Romm in *The Washington Post*. The social network announced in March it intends “to expand the deployment” of end-to-end encryption “as part of a ‘privacy-focused’ retooling of its business.” Barr, along with officials from the U.K. and Australia, has argued that the effort “would hamstring law enforcement” and block “access to critical evidence, including millions of reports about child sexual exploitation.” In its response last week, Facebook said that providing the U.S. government with a “backdoor into secure communications” would serve as a “gift to criminals, hackers, and repressive regimes.” Facebook-owned WhatsApp already offers encryption, as does Apple’s iMessage.



EVER WONDER IF THERE'S LIFE ON OTHER PLANETS?

LUCIANNE WALKOWICZ
ASTRONOMER, THE ADLER PLANETARIUM

GIRLS IN STEM BECOME WOMEN WHO CHANGE THE WORLD.
LEARN MORE @SHECANSTEM ON INSTAGRAM

Some of the things they said were good for us...

Napping may boost your heart health. That's the finding of researchers in Switzerland, who tracked 3,462 healthy adults for five years. Those who dozed for five minutes to an hour once or twice a week were 48 percent less likely to suffer a heart attack, stroke, or heart failure than those who never snoozed in the daytime. Napping longer or more often didn't deliver any additional health benefits. Lead author Nadine Häusler says it's still unclear how napping might influence heart health. "Our best guess," she says, "is that a daytime nap just releases stress from insufficient sleep."

Eating mushrooms could lower your chances of developing memory problems in later life. A study involving 663 Chinese men and women found that those who ate one or two 5-ounce portions of mushrooms a week had a 43 percent lower risk of developing mild cognitive impairment—a precursor to Alzheimer's—than participants who consumed less than one. Those who ate more than two portions had a 52 percent reduced risk. Lead author Lei Feng says the most likely explanation for this "dramatic effect" is that the fungi contain antioxidants that protect neurons from damage.



Having kids makes you happier—once they've grown up and moved out. Previous research has shown that, earlier in life, people with children are less happy and more prone to depression than childless peers, partly because they get less sleep and experience more stress. But a study of 55,000



Europeans found that parents were more likely to be happier when they got older, provided their offspring had flown the nest. Researchers say grown kids can offer parents more social and emotional connection, as well as care and other support. "There is no simple answer on whether children bring happiness," says lead author Christoph Becker. "It depends on which stage of life your children are at."

Running just once a week could significantly cut your risk of a premature death. Researchers in Australia looked at 14 studies that tracked the health of some 230,000 people for up to 35 years. Those who did any running at all were 27 percent less likely to die early. Surprisingly, the runners who ran longer distances or at a faster pace didn't see their risk decline any further—just 50 minutes of jogging a week was enough. "If you are physically inactive and don't have much time on your hands for exercise," says lead author Zeljko Pedisic, "running might just be the right activity for you."

NSAIDs such as aspirin and ibuprofen may help relieve depression. In an analysis of previous studies, researchers in China found that a daily dose of nonsteroidal

anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) was 79 percent more effective than a placebo at eliminating depressive symptoms. Several studies have linked depression to brain and body inflammation, leading to speculation that an overactive immune system—which can cause inflammation—could be a factor. Alan Carson, who edited the study, says depression "may simply be the price we pay for having an immune system."

Northern Irish soil could have healing properties. Residents of the Boho Highlands have been using the alkaline dirt from a local churchyard as a folk remedy for 200 years. An analysis of this "sacred clay" revealed that it contains a previously unknown strain of *Streptomyces* bacterium that can halt the growth of four of the top six superbugs resistant to conventional antibiotics. Scientists believe such traditional medicines may prove to be a useful source of new antibiotics. "Some of these cures might have been perfectly effective," says co-author Gerry Quinn. The people "just didn't have any knowledge of the scientific principles or biochemistry behind them."

High-fiber foods can shrink your risk of dying early or developing a chronic condition. A scientific review commissioned by the World Health Organization noted that people who ate the most fiber—found in fruit, vegetables, and whole-grain cereals, pasta, and bread—were 15 to 30 percent less likely to die prematurely than those who ate the least. Heavy fiber consumers were also 16 to 24 percent less likely to suffer a stroke or develop heart disease, type 2 diabetes, or colorectal cancer. The optimal fiber intake was 25 to 29 grams a day; American adults consume an average of 15 grams.

The big scientific breakthroughs of 2019...

Capturing a black hole

Scientists this year unveiled the first-ever image of a black hole. One of the universe's most enigmatic phenomena, a black hole is a cosmic abyss so dense with matter that not even light can escape. The picture from Messier 87, a galaxy 55 million light-years away, shows a bright ring of particles heated to billions of degrees, circling a supermassive black hole some 25 billion miles wide. To capture the image, scientists focused eight ultrapowerful radio telescopes around the world on Messier 87



for 10 days. Researchers compared the resulting images to millions of simulations of what the black hole might look like—and found a match. "We have seen what we thought was unseeable," says project leader Shep Doeleman.

Fighting Ebola

Ebola could soon be classified as a curable disease, thanks to a trial of experimental treatments in Congo. An epidemic of the hemorrhagic disease has killed more than 2,200 people in the African nation; about

70 percent of those who catch Ebola die. But the death rate plummeted to 29 percent for patients on one new drug, and 34 percent for those on another. Among patients who began treatment soon after developing symptoms, rates fell to 6 percent and 11 percent, respectively. The drugs use monoclonal antibodies: Y-shaped proteins that call on immune cells to attack the Ebola virus.

The new CRISPR

Scientists have developed a gene-editing tool that could one day correct 89 percent of the genetic mutations that cause inherited diseases, such as cystic fibrosis and sickle

...and some of the things we were told to avoid

Playing soccer may increase your risk of neurodegenerative disease. Researchers in Scotland compared the deaths of 7,676 male former pro soccer players with those of more than 23,000 people from the general population. The ex-players had a longer life expectancy overall, but a 3.5 times higher risk of dying from diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. While soccer players don't endure the same kind of crashing tackles that can cause degenerative brain disease in football players, frequent heading of the ball can alter the makeup of the brain. "It is not just the 'big hits' resulting in symptomatic concussions that increase the risk of neurologic disorders later in life," says neurologist Robert Stern.



Aspirin could significantly raise the chance of dangerous bleeds in the gut and skull. A daily dose of the blood-thinning drug can help prevent heart attacks and strokes for those with existing cardiovascular issues. But a review by British scientists of 13 previous studies found that for people with no issues, the cons outweigh the pros. Overall, aspirin reduced the risk of cardiovascular problems by 11 percent—but was linked to a 43 percent increase in significant bleeding events. Co-author Sean Lee Zheng says that before prescribing the drug, physicians should weigh "any small potential cardiovascular benefits [against] the real risk of severe bleeding."

Ultraprocessed foods can shorten your life. A French study found that every

10 percent increase in consumption of these foods—such as chicken nuggets, potato chips, and ready-to-eat meals—was linked to a 14 percent higher risk of early death.

The researchers say some additives in ultraprocessed products are carcinogenic and that chemicals from packaging may leak into the foods. Co-author Mathilde Touvier recommends people "avoid these foods as much as they can."

Getting a tattoo can put toxic metal fragments in your body. German scientists examined 12 new steel tattoo needles with a high-powered microscope, both before and after use. They found that chromium and nickel particles break off during the tattooing process and become embedded in the skin. Those metals can travel through the body and build up in lymph nodes, potentially triggering an allergic reaction. Anyone thinking of getting inked, says lead author Ines Schreiber, should be aware they could be exposed to "impurities that might be allergenic or carcinogenic."

Vaping may damage blood vessels. Using MRI scans, University of Pennsylvania scientists monitored blood flow in 31 non-smokers. After participants had several puffs on an e-cigarette without a flavor or nicotine, their blood flow was noticeably worse. Overall, vaping temporarily constricted arteries in the legs, heart, and brain by more than 30 percent. The researchers believe glycerol and propylene glycol, the core ingredients of vape fluid besides water, can irri-

tate the lining of blood vessels. More than 2,400 people have been hospitalized over the past year for vaping-related lung illnesses, and at least 52 have died. Scientists suspect many had vaped illicit liquids containing THC—the psychoactive compound in marijuana—that had been cut with vitamin E acetate, a sticky oil that can cling to the lungs.

Doctors' coats are often contaminated with dangerous bacteria and other pathogens. A review of previous studies found that up to 16 percent of the garments tested positive for MRSA, and up to 42 percent for Gram-negative rods—antibiotic-resistant bacteria that can cause skin and blood infections, sepsis, pneumonia, and other health issues. Researchers found that stethoscopes, phones, and digital tablets can also be contaminated with dangerous bacteria. Previous studies have found that most American physicians wash their coats less than once a week; up to 17 percent go more than a month between washes.

White meat may raise your cholesterol levels as much as red meat. Researchers put 113 adults on three rotating monthlong diets: one centered on lean cuts of beef, the second on lean cuts of chicken, and the third on plant proteins. Half the participants' diets—irrespective of their main protein source—were high in saturated fats, while half were low. Overall, white meat raised levels of LDL cholesterol, the so-called bad cholesterol that clogs arteries, just as much as red meat—even when saturated fat levels were equal.



...from the first picture of a black hole to a new gene-editing tool

cell anemia. The most popular existing gene-editing approach, CRISPR-Cas9, uses "molecular scissors" to locate faulty genetic code, then cuts both strands of the DNA double helix and splices in a new section of code. Though cheap and fast, this process often damages nearby code or inserts the new material in the wrong place. The new technology, known as prime editing, cuts only one strand of the double helix—minimizing the risk of unintended changes.

Mind-reading robo-suit

A quadriplegic man in France can move all four of his paralyzed limbs again, thanks to

a pioneering brain-controlled bodysuit. The patient, identified only as Thibault, had two implants surgically placed over the parts of his brain that control movement. His brain signals are sent to a nearby computer, which translates them into movement instructions for the exoskeleton suit. Though years away from being publicly available, the technology could pave the way for mind-controlled wheelchairs and similar equipment. Thibault said taking his first steps felt like being "the first man on the moon."

Blood test for Alzheimer's

Doctors could soon use a simple blood

test to predict if a patient will develop Alzheimer's, years before symptoms appear. An international team of researchers found that people genetically predisposed to the disorder had distinctly higher levels of neurofilament light chain—a protein found in the brain and spinal cord—seven years before symptoms began, and noticeably faster-growing levels more than 16 years in advance. An early test could help scientists determine whether new Alzheimer's drugs are effective. Study author Mathias Jucker says the reason there is no effective treatment for the condition is "partly because current therapies start much too late."

Critics' choice: The year's best novels...

1 The Nickel Boys

by Colson Whitehead (Doubleday, \$25)

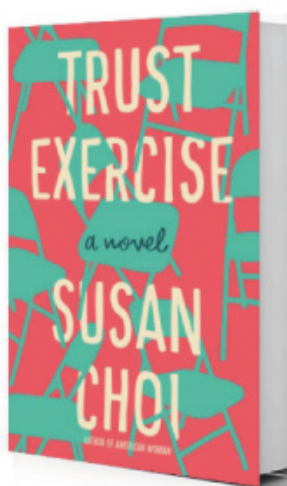


Colson Whitehead “can succeed at any novel he takes on,” said Sam Sacks in *The Wall Street Journal*. The 2017 Pulitzer Prize winner chose to forego any flashes of whimsy or magic realism in his latest effort, but the book doesn’t need them. It takes a grim true story—about

a 20th-century Florida reform school at which black students were routinely beaten and often murdered—and makes the horror vivid. His protagonist is a model teenager who’s been unjustly confined to the Nickel Academy, and the young man’s experience inside “culminates in a dazzling final twist that Whitehead stages with such casual skill that one only begins to unpack its meanings well after the book has ended.” Elwood’s best friend inside is less trusting than he that justice will prevail, and the pair regularly debate the nature of the world they live in, said Anna Deavere Smith in *The New York Review of Books*. Only one viewpoint can prevail in this “profoundly sad but elegant” novel. Yet in the toxic place fate has consigned them to, “their comradeship is the hope.”

2 Trust Exercise

by Susan Choi (Holt, \$27)



The first third of this crafty novel, though “magnificent on its own,” offers no hint of the twists to come, said David Canfield in *Entertainment Weekly*. In 1980s Texas, an affair between two drama students at an elite arts high school ignites, then flames out—all under the

watchful eye of a charismatic teacher whose instructional style borders on emotional abuse. But the girl in that relationship is only the book’s first narrator: About 100 pages in, the time frame shifts and a former classmate takes over with an account that “calls into question much of the story as it’s been told.” The new drama that begins to unfold is “propelled by white-

hot rage and the desire for revenge,” said Lucy Scholes in the *Financial Times*. And that’s not the novel’s final reset, or Choi’s final word on the ethics of co-opting the details of other peoples’ lives for the sake of telling one’s own story. Though Choi has written wily novels before, “*Trust Exercise* is without a doubt her most ingenious yet.”

3 Lost Children Archive

by Valeria Luiselli (Knopf, \$28)



“Not since *Lolita* has a road trip so brilliantly captured the dark underbelly of the American dream,” said Carmen Maria Machado in *O* magazine. In Valeria Luiselli’s fourth novel, a New York couple makes a cross-country road trip with their two young children, trying to distract them-

selves from marriage troubles by pursuing separate passion projects: He is creating an audio documentary about the Apache; she is making her own on migrant children from Central America. As Luiselli lets the story slowly unfold, “her language is so transporting, it stops you time and again.” And she has a major plot twist waiting, said James Wood in *The New Yorker*. Out West, the couple’s children, ages 10 and 5, go missing, tripping a gripping and “somewhat fantastical” tale in which they endure some of the same hardships faced by young migrants. Ultimately, this “brilliantly intricate” book reminds us why the stories of vulnerable people need to be told and retold. “The story hasn’t ended yet—far from it.”

4 On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous

by Ocean Vuong (Penguin, \$26)



It might be easiest to read Ocean Vuong’s “devastatingly beautiful” coming-of-age novel in small doses, said Heller McAlpin in *NPR.org*. “Not because the often elliptical, poetic language is difficult, but because the subject matter is so shattering.” Drawing loosely from his own life,

the Saigon-born poet presents the novel as a long letter written by a character we

know as Little Dog, a young Vietnamese-American brought up in Hartford, Conn., where he was a victim of racism and abuse. Little Dog is writing to his mother, a war refugee who doesn’t read English well, so he feels free to include a secret from his teenage years: a sexual relationship he had with the white grandson of a tobacco farmer. “There are moments when the writing slips, becoming cloying,” said Steph Cha in the *Los Angeles Times*. Given the way Vuong consistently reaches for poetic effect, though, “it’s impressive that this doesn’t happen more often.” Despite the hardships it describes, “*On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous* is a book of sustained beauty and lyricism, a series of high notes that trembles exquisitely almost without break.”

5 The Topeka School

by Ben Lerner (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$27)



“Here is that all-too-rare masterpiece: a svelte big novel,” said Ron Charles in *The Washington Post*. Ben Lerner’s “extraordinarily brilliant” bildungsroman requires fewer than 300 pages to capture the particularities of his 1990s hometown Topeka and use those details to illuminate

a wider world. As the novel traces the travails of a Lerner-like high-school debate star, the tension between his psychologist parents, and the violent potential of an emotionally disturbed dropout, it provides insight that “seems downright forensic in its ability to trace the pathologies consuming us.” Not to me, said Evan Kindley in *The Nation*. Lerner, an acclaimed poet, wants to believe that miscommunications and misunderstandings explain the nation’s current divisions. But that’s why he’s not a social scientist. He is an acclaimed poet who has now written three novels, and “as a prose performance, *The Topeka School* is an unqualified success.”

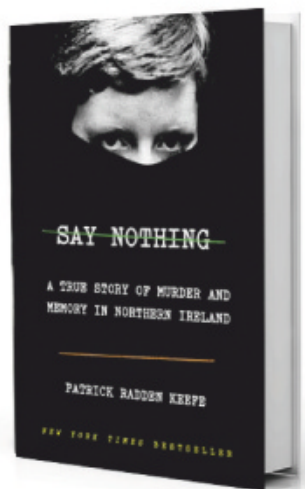
How the books were chosen

Our top-5 lists were created by tallying and weighting the rankings of 23 other sources, including *AVClub.com*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *The Economist*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *GQ*, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *NPR*, *O* magazine, *People*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Slate.com*, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *Time*, *USA Today*, *Vogue*, *Vox.com*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Washington Post*.

...and the year's best nonfiction

1 Say Nothing

by Patrick Radden Keefe (Doubleday, \$29)

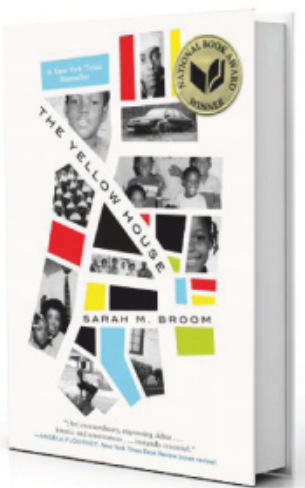


Patrick Radden Keefe's "true crime masterpiece" is "a perfect example of how to take a brutal crime and use it to tell, in page after gripping page, a much larger history," said *Time*. In 1972, Irish Republican Army militants abducted and shot Jean McConville, a

widowed 38-year-old mother of 10, on suspicion that she was a British informant. She likely wasn't, and her captors, who considered themselves freedom fighters, spent decades haunted by their actions, especially because the bloodshed never resulted in their achieving the goal of a united Ireland. Keefe, a *New Yorker* writer, contends that Gerry Adams, who in 1972 was commander of the IRA's Belfast branch, ordered McConville's murder, said **Jonathan Stevenson** in *Foreign Affairs*. When Adams restyled himself in the 1980s as a peace-brokering politician and denied having been an IRA member, his former foot soldiers felt doubly betrayed. Regardless of which of them fired the fatal shot—and Keefe offers a plausible theory—the true significance of McConville's death "lies in what it reveals: that political violence disfigures society as a whole, whether with guilt or with grief, even decades after the fighting has stopped."

2 The Yellow House

by Sarah M. Broom (Grove, \$26)



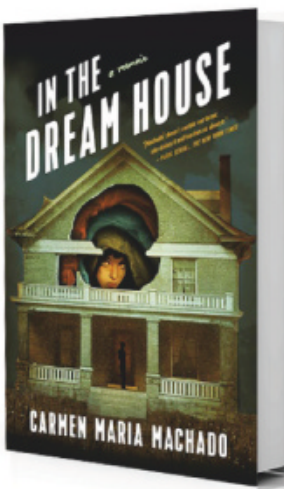
Sarah Broom has written more than a tribute to family and home, said **Danielle Jackson** in *Bookforum*. The author's memoir about her New Orleans childhood abode, which was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina, is also "a master-work of art and

journalism," a deserving National Book Award winner concerned with "grave mistakes of the 20th century, washed ashore in the 21st." Broom's mother was a pregnant 19-year-old widow in 1961

when she bought the titular home, a new shotgun-style house in a neighborhood built on swampland. But the city and the country had made promises it did not keep, and after years of prideful struggle for the family, Hurricane Katrina turned hard times into lasting catastrophe, said **Angela Flournoy** in *The New York Times*. Broom's mother, siblings, and other relatives were forced to scatter, and though her book cannot resurrect the house or reunite the family, it is "an instantly essential text," an engrossing story of family love and "a full indictment of the greed, indifference, and poor city planning that led her family's home to be wiped off the map." Satisfyingly, it's also an examination of the possible future of the city of New Orleans, "and of America writ large."

3 In the Dream House

by Carmen Maria Machado (Graywolf, \$26)

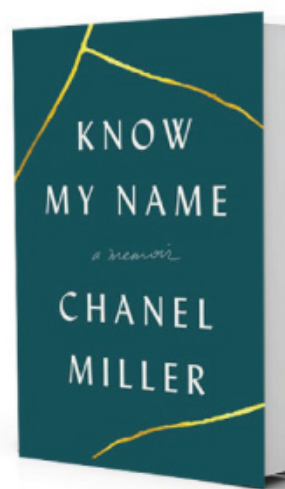


"Desire enslaves even the brilliant," said **Kristen Millares Young** in *The Washington Post*. Consider author Carmen Maria Machado, whose formally inventive memoir revisits a year in her life when her partner in a seemingly idyllic same-sex relationship

turned abusive and Machado struggled to realize that escape was necessary. Because Machado was living a story unlike any she had heard before, she slips in and out of various genre modes as she shares her tale, stringing together brief passages that separately evoke fairy tales, say, or horror or noir. That may sound complicated, but *In the Dream House* is also "a page-turner of psychological suspense." Its structure, in many ways, echoes that of Machado's "much celebrated" debut, *Her Body and Other Parties*, said **Constance Grady** in *Vox.com*. That story collection skipped between genres "but revolved around a single theme: women, their bodies, and other parties who believe themselves entitled to those bodies." This book is darker, but it might also be more generous, especially to readers who might find themselves inside a similar nightmare. It speaks with searing honesty "so that they don't have to make up their own language to make sense of what's happening to them."

4 Know My Name

by Chanel Miller (Viking, \$28)

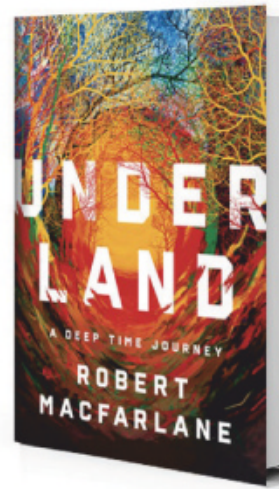


"When I picked up Chanel Miller's memoir, I didn't expect to feel anything new," said **Anna Silman** in *NYMag.com*. Miller is the young woman, formerly anonymous, who in 2015 was raped outside a Stanford University frat party by a star freshman swimmer. But while women

are increasingly sharing stories of sexual violence, *Know My Name* is "one of the most moving depictions of sexual assault I have ever read." Miller's account is difficult to read—"in part because it is beautiful to read," said **Megan Garber** in *The Atlantic*. "It forces readers not only to look and listen but also to really see"—see her as an unconscious 22-year-old being assaulted next to a dumpster and also see her in the aftermath, living day to day with trauma and the wrenching demands of the justice system. With blistering insight, she has transformed that trauma into art. It is art, sadly, that "shouldn't have to exist at all."

5 Underland

by Robert Macfarlane (Norton, \$28)



"There's no terra as incognita as the terra beneath our feet," said **Peter Fish** in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. In this singular travelogue, British writer Robert Macfarlane wanders the world visiting caves, underground labs, and various other subterranean sites to explore that

little-seen world, and because he's a "tart, luminous" writer, his observations "throw off sparks." *Underland's* true subject is civilization, said **Marcia Bjornerud** in *The Wall Street Journal*. On his visit to a nuclear waste repository in Finland, he is surprised to discover that the facility's sad task nourishes sober, collective effort of a type that's rare for humans. He gives women too little mind. Still, "I was bewitched by Macfarlane's incantatory tales." He is a philosopher, a historian, a scientist, a lecturer, and "above all, a poet."



Parasite



Little Women



Once Upon a Time...in Hollywood

Critics' choice: The year's top 10 movies

1 Parasite

"If you want to know what cinema is, watch this," said **Manohla Dargis** in *The New York Times*. South Korean director Bong Joon-ho's "brilliant" and "deeply unsettling" foreign-language thriller explores the costs to human dignity exacted by the modern social order as the members of one destitute Seoul family insinuate themselves into a wealthy household, then see their elaborate scheme go horribly wrong. Hilarious until it turns tragic, *Parasite* is "a perfectly directed movie from one of the greatest filmmakers working today."

2 The Irishman

Behold "the late-career masterpiece" of "America's greatest living director," said **Peter Travers** in *Rolling Stone*. Martin Scorsese assembled Robert De Niro, Al Pacino, Joe Pesci, and Harvey Keitel to create an epic portrait of a Mafia soldier (De Niro) who is eventually tasked with assassinating Teamsters boss Jimmy Hoffa. As always, "it's the shreds of humanity in monsters that scare us, because they make us see ourselves in them." And Scorsese shows us how age and mortality bring even wiseguys to their knees.

3 Marriage Story

Noah Baumbach's wrenching domestic drama "shows us how the bitterest divorces don't just end a marriage but poison its very spirit," said **Justin Chang** in the *Los Angeles Times*. Adam Driver and Scarlett Johansson co-star as a beautifully flawed New York couple, and when the pair's at-first amicable separation descends into vitriol, *Marriage Story* becomes "an emotionally lacerating experience—a broken-family classic to set beside *Kramer vs. Kramer*."

4 Once Upon a Time...in Hollywood

Quentin Tarantino's 1960s L.A. epic reminds us all what the director is capable of "when he really puts his heart—including the blackened parts—into his work," said **Adam Nayman** in *TheRinger.com*. Leonardo DiCaprio and Brad Pitt prove "beguilingly human" in "richly symbolic" roles—as a fading TV Western star and his

stunt-double running mate. Both are confronting irrelevance in the new Hollywood, where the Manson Family lurks in the shadows beyond the neon lights. The results prove to be prime Tarantino: "clever, sentimental, outrageous, daring, annoying, sadistic, and singular."

5 Little Women

Greta Gerwig's scheduled Christmas Day release "arrives as a present in itself," said **Dana Stevens** in *Slate.com*. "As crammed with gorgeous movie stars in luscious period costume as a fruitcake is with candied nuts and cherries," this *Little Women* puts Saoirse Ronan, Emma Watson, and Florence Pugh at the center of a cast decked out further by Meryl Streep, Bob Odenkirk, and Timothée Chalamet. It's thrilling to watch Gerwig, the actress turned director who made 2017's *Lady Bird*, now pull off a grand production "with such confidence, humor, and style."

6 Uncut Gems

Leave it to the Safdie brothers to give us the year's "most hyperventilating watch," said **Joshua Rothkopf** in *Time Out New York*. The directorial duo who made a hustler out of Robert Pattinson in 2017's gritty *Good Time* doubled down by creating another "electrifying and abrasive" crime thriller. Adam Sandler, playing a gambling diamond dealer who's also a wayward father, delivers "a distilled shot of tough-New York-Jew attitude." The directors deserve equal credit, though: "Their vigor is an instant rush."

7 The Souvenir

Joanna Hogg's semiautobiographical drama is "the kind of love story you wouldn't want to live," said **K. Austin Collins** in *VanityFair.com*. Honor Swinton Byrne stars as a naïve young filmmaker who becomes entangled with a genteel heroin addict, played by Tom Burke. Unfolding in a series of "seemingly random" scenes, *The Souvenir* rifles through the protagonist's memories of the ill-fated romance "like they're pictures in a book." It becomes a moving lesson in "how we construct an idea of ourselves through memory."

8 The Farewell

The film that certified the dramatic talents of Awkwafina is often funny, "but never at the expense of the rueful tenderness at its core," said **Ann Hornaday** in *The Washington Post*. The rapper turned actress, who was hilarious in *Ocean's 8* and *Crazy Rich Asians*, plays a 30-something New Yorker who travels to her native China to bid goodbye to a beloved grandmother who's being kept in the dark about her own terminal cancer. *The Farewell* "pays delightful, insightful homage to the façades and pretenses nearly everyone adopts in the name of compassion."

9 Pain & Glory

"*Pain & Glory* may be Pedro Almodóvar's most resplendent and moving film," said **Stephanie Zacharek** in *Time*. The great Spanish director draws "the performance of a lifetime" from Antonio Banderas, who plays an ailing filmmaker who has given up on life—only to plunge back into it when a long-lost love reappears. The subtitled, vibrantly colored drama becomes "a hymn to the mysterious whatever-it-is that keeps any of us going, in the years, months, or days before our bodies betray us."

10 Portrait of a Lady on Fire

To me, this sumptuous French drama about an 18th-century romance was "the most enthralling cinematic experience of the year," said **David Sims** in *The Atlantic*. On a remote island, love slowly blooms between a visiting portrait artist (Noémie Merlant) and her subject (Adèle Haenel), who's been promised to a Milanese nobleman. Director Céline Sciamma frames the story as an elegy to a doomed passion, and "every shot is precisely composed, every image deployed for maximum impact."

The 24 sources used to establish these rankings include *The Atlantic*, *Entertainment Weekly*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *TheRinger.com*, *Rolling Stone*, *Time*, *USA Today*, *Vanity Fair*, *Variety*, *Vox.com*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Washington Post*.

Critics' choice: The year's top albums

1 Lana Del Rey

Norman F---ing Rockwell!



Lana Del Rey has emerged, at 34, as “the poet laureate of a world on fire,” said Amy Phillips in *Pitchfork.com*. Her fifth album combines elements that will be familiar to longtime fans: “Lynchian

dreamscapes of haunted prom queens and suburban ennui, meditations on the death of the American dream, Old Hollywood glamour,” and “the agony and ecstasy of bad men.” Here, though, her airy “psych-folk” sound is more focused, she has widened her lens to offer an L.A.-rooted view of the growing climate crisis, and “her songwriting at last goes toe to toe with the grandeur of her ideas.” With her narcotized vocals, her reliance on piano-based ballads, and her refusal to join other female pop stars in peddling self-empowerment, Del Rey has become “a genre unto herself,” said Rob Harvilla in *TheRinger.com*. During this past decade, “no one wrote about the American dream with more cutting perception.”

2 Billie Eilish When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?

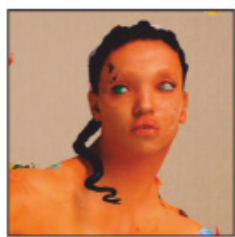


Billie Eilish makes music that “understands how adolescence can feel like a horror movie,” said Jon Pareles in *The New York Times*. On the 17-year-old’s remarkable debut album, most every

track consists of just a few elements: Eilish’s “quiet, breathy voice,” a beat, an electronic bass line, and “just enough keyboard notes to sketch a melody.” But all are “death-haunted,” all have a sense of looming suspense, and many suggest how “the ordinary can suddenly be pierced by the ghastly or the absurd.” The album, recorded in her bedroom with her brother serving as producer, “felt like it instantly transformed pop,” said Carl Wilson in *Slate.com*. And given Eilish’s talents for melody and mood, she “seems like she’ll be creating unmissable art for as long as she cares to.”

3 FKA Twigs

Magdalene



“It’s hard to overstate just how pretty of an album *Magdalene* is,” said James Rettig in *Stereogum.com*. The first full-length from FKA Twigs in five years focuses on a painful personal passage, but

the 31-year-old British pop avant-gardist and her collaborators have blended swelling strings, sonorous piano, sampled church choirs, and the star’s own pure soprano voice to produce

“sound designs worthy of Renaissance architecture.” Twigs hasn’t forsworn the use of jarring industrial sounds or echoes of hip-hop, said Craig Jenkins in *New York* magazine. *Magdalene* and its accompanying videos represent “an effortless braiding of high-brow electronic art-pop, carnal soul music, and lurid modern dance.” It is one woman meeting the particular challenges of her life “with regal grace, prideful eccentricity, and forthright sensuality.”

4 Angel Olsen

All Mirrors



Angel Olsen’s latest is “a towering, tempestuous” album on which “nearly every song has calms and storms to match Olsen’s soaring voice,” said Jem Aswad in *Variety*. Having previously established

herself as one of the decade’s most promising singer-songwriters, the Asheville, N.C.-based indie-rock artist enlisted a 14-piece orchestra to turn *All Mirrors* into a record that “at nearly all points sounds really, really big.” Though Olsen is still singing about toxic relationships, “this time around, she escapes their destruction and finds not just happiness but catharsis,” said Max Freedman in *PasteMagazine.com*. Her new orchestral sound reaches “extraordinarily goose bump-inducing heights.”

5 Jamila Woods

Legacy! Legacy!



Three years after an impressive debut, Jamila Woods “has expanded on the idea of what a modern R&B album can do and say,” said Matt Melis in *ConsequenceOfSound.net*. The Chicago poet,

activist, teacher, and neo-soul singer-songwriter named each of the 13 tracks on *Legacy! Legacy!* after an iconic artist of color, many of whom stood proudly against discrimination. And as she channels the mindsets of James Baldwin, Zora Neale Hurston, Miles Davis, and Frida Kahlo, the surprise is that Woods is able to transform her passions into “one of the most thoughtful and creative concept albums of this, or any, decade.” These are songs that “elude genre—a blend of trip-hop, jazz rap/spoken word, R&B, gospel,” said Greg Kot in the *Chicago Tribune*. This is urgent cultural history; “it plays like a news bulletin from the past.”

The 23 sources used to establish these rankings include *Billboard*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *ConsequenceOfSound.net*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *New York* magazine, *The New York Times*, *NPR.org*, *PasteMagazine.com*, *TheRinger.com*, *Rolling Stone*, *Slate.com*, *Time*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Washington Post*.

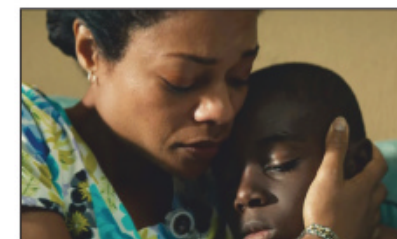
The best of the 2010s

America’s critics weigh in



ALBUMS

1. **To Pimp a Butterfly** by Kendrick Lamar
2. **Lemonade** by Beyoncé
3. **My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy** by Kanye West
4. **Blonde** by Frank Ocean
5. **A Seat at the Table** by Solange
6. **Body Talk** by Robyn
7. **Channel Orange** by Frank Ocean
8. **Modern Vampires of the City** by Vampire Weekend
9. **Anti-** by Rihanna
10. **Emotion** by Carly Rae Jepsen



FILMS

1. **Moonlight**
2. **Mad Max: Fury Road**
3. **The Tree of Life**
4. **Inside Llewyn Davis**
5. **Get Out**
6. **Phantom Thread**
7. **The Social Network**
8. **Under the Skin**
9. **The Master**
10. **Melancholia**



SHOWS

1. **Breaking Bad** (AMC)
2. **Atlanta** (FX)
3. **The Americans** (FX)
4. **Fleabag** (Amazon Prime)
5. **The Leftovers** (HBO)
6. **Mad Men** (AMC)
7. **Parks and Recreation** (NBC)
8. **Twin Peaks: The Return** (Showtime)
9. **Bojack Horseman** (Netflix)
10. **Veep** (HBO)

Five stories that had the art world talking

**VISIONS OF DESTRUCTION**

In a sight that shocked news watchers worldwide, flames engulfed Notre-Dame de Paris in April, reminding every witness of the fragility of any cultural inheritance. The roaring blaze began in the attic of the 850-year-old cathedral, destroying the roof and a signature 19th-century spire. But the main structure somehow survived, and ultrawealthy donors quickly pledged massive sums to a fund supporting a complete rebuild. Several months later, a natural disaster in Venice foreshadowed a wider looming crisis. The highest tide in half a century (and second-highest in 1,400 years of recorded history) flooded up to 85 percent of the city, damaging countless historic structures and some priceless art. At a musical conservatory, the water damaged some 1,500 archived manuscripts, including original scores by Vivaldi. Venice's mayor blamed climate change; by the end of the century, according to some climatologists, the streets of the city will be entirely underwater. And that's just one cultural capital.

TRIUMPH OF THE REBELS

Art-world activism began to win changes in 2019. At this year's Whitney Biennial—the nation's showcase for art of the



moment—half the featured artists were women (a first) and a majority were non-white. And the New York City museum was also one of the first major institutions where a recent uprising against “toxic philanthropy” had the desired effect. Months-long demonstrations had targeted trustee Warren Kanders, whose

company manufactures tear-gas canisters that have been used against migrants and protesters worldwide. Artist Michael Rakowitz pulled out before the Biennial's May opening, and when eight others threatened to follow suit, Kanders resigned. Earlier, both the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the American Museum of Natural History cut ties with the Sackler family—the billionaire owners of Purdue Pharma—over the fam-

ily's role in unleashing the opioid epidemic. But the fire of rebellion did not always burn hot where it matters. At the Biennial, the art struck many critics as protest work for an insular audience, or as *Wall Street Journal* critic Peter Plagens put it, “a raised fist in an opera glove.”

**KITSCH HAS A MOMENT**

Self-aware tackiness is back in a big way. In May, Jeff Koons reclaimed the title of most expensive living artist when his cartoonish stainless-steel sculpture *Rabbit* sold for \$91.1 million at auction, narrowly surpassing the sum paid in 2018 for a David Hockney painting. But it was Kaws (real name Brian Donnelly) who truly turned art-market heads. *The Kaws Album*, a 2005 painting that parodies the album cover of the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* by crowding in characters from *The Simpsons*, sold in April for \$14.8 million—a full 15 times the pre-auction estimate. By midyear, after a flurry of sales, the Brooklyn-based former graffiti tagger and unabashedly commercially minded image-maker stood second only to Koons in total sales revenue generated by an American contemporary artist. Maybe the Met Costume Institute was onto something when it chose “camp” as the theme of

its 2019 show. The opening celebrated centuries of taste-obliterating attire and drew scores of celebrities trying to one-up the past, including rapper Cardi B (pictured) in 30,000 feathers and a mile of red silk.

**VIJA CELMINS, SEER**

Not every artist courts the selfie crowd. Vija Celmins, the subject of a retrospective that traveled this year from San Francisco to Toronto to New York, emerged as the antidote to our era's surfeit of noise and spectacle. For the past six decades, the Latvian-American artist has trained her eye on common objects and phenomena—a shell, a rock, the starry sky, the surface of the ocean—and precisely reproduced it, in paint or pencil. Her work requires concentrated attention, but spending time with it, said Susan Tallman in *The New York Review of Books*, “leaves us with a lasting sense of possibility, an awareness of the largely unnoticed richness of the world.”

THE BANANA RECONSIDERED

For those who enjoy mocking contemporary art, it was a gift that kept giving. In early December, Italian mischief-maker Maurizio Cattelan arrived at Art Basel in Miami to unveil his latest work: a banana duct-taped to a gallery wall. *Comedian* quickly sold for at least \$120,000 to buyers who compared the work to a Warhol. But Andy Warhol never created a work that could be eaten—which is exactly what a fellow artist did to *Comedian* days later. The stunt wasn't Cattelan's first. In 1999, he duct-taped his art dealer to a wall. In 2016, he created a functioning 18-karat gold toilet for New York's Guggenheim Museum. This year, the same toilet was stolen while it was being exhibited at a palace in rural England. Who can question that? Outside the art world, a banana costs 35 cents; the gold in the toilet is worth \$4 million.

Movies on TV

Monday, Dec. 23

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation

Develop a game plan for potential holiday mishaps by reviewing how the Griswold family weathered their own hilariously catastrophic holiday. With Chevy Chase. (1989) 8 p.m., AMC

Tuesday, Dec. 24

The Bishop's Wife

Cary Grant, David Niven, and Loretta Young co-star in a classic Christmas comedy about a debonair angel who pays a visit to a distressed bishop. (1948) 8 p.m., TCM

Saturday, Dec. 28

Pokémon Detective Pikachu

The adorable face of the Pokémon franchise becomes a pint-size, fast-talking sleuth—voiced by Ryan Reynolds—in an imaginative family-friendly adventure. (2019) 8 p.m., HBO

Monday, Dec. 30

Her Smell

Elisabeth Moss turns feral as a self-sabotaging 1990s grunge singer battling addiction and inner demons. (2019) 8 p.m., HBO

Wednesday, Jan. 1

On the Basis of Sex

Felicity Jones stars as Ruth Bader Ginsburg in a biopic focused on the future justice's prior career as a pioneering legal foe of gender discrimination. (2018) 9 p.m., Showtime

Saturday, Jan. 4

Almost Famous

Cameron Crowe drew on his days as a teenage scribe at *Rolling Stone* to create his charming comedy-drama about a 15-year-old prodigy on the road with a debauched hard-rock band. With Kate Hudson and Frances McDormand. (2000) 10 p.m., Epix

Sunday, Jan. 5

Fiddler on the Roof

A Jewish milkman in czarist Russia struggles to uphold tradition while raising five daughters in a lovable adaptation of the hit stage musical. (1971) 8 p.m., TCM

The Week's guide to what's worth watching

iHeartRadio Jingle Ball

A re-airing of this year's annual concert special rings in Christmas evening's prime-time hours with a lineup that Top 40 fans will love, including Lizzo, Billie Eilish, and Camila Cabello. *Wednesday, Dec. 25, at 8 p.m., the CW*

You

The day after Christmas is arguably the perfect time to check in on that serial killer everyone was crushing on early this year. Penn Badgley perhaps found too many fans when *You* moved from Lifetime to Netflix, given that his character Joe Goldberg was a psychopath beneath his bookish charms. As Season 2 begins, Joe has left a trail of bodies behind and moved cross-country to L.A., where an ultrarich socialite, played by Victoria Pedretti, becomes his new obsession. *Available for streaming Thursday, Dec. 26, Netflix*

The Peach Bowl and Fiesta Bowl

The four semifinalists for the college football title will meet in back-to-back bowl games. The early contest pits Oklahoma against No. 1-ranked LSU. Ohio State and Clemson will kick off four hours later. *Coverage begins Saturday, Dec. 28, at 4 p.m. ESPN*

Messiah

He performs miracles and talks of doing the work of his father. But CIA officer Eva Geller suspects that the mysterious young man traveling the world and building a following from Syria to Texas is a growing threat. So is she trying to take down humanity's savior? This tense new thriller series wants viewers in suspense, but the Arabic name they've given the character gives away the game. Michelle Monaghan and Mehdi Debihi co-star. *Available for streaming Wednesday, Jan. 1, Netflix*

Deputy

What L.A. needs is one good lawman. That's the premise of this new series, a punchy modern Western about a maverick crime fighter who's promoted to acting sheriff of Los Angeles County owing to an arcane rule crafted when California was the Wild West. Stephen Dorff stars as a



Deputy: A cowboy rides tall in 2019 L.A.

Walker, Texas Ranger type who'd rather be breaking down a door than sitting behind a desk. With Bex Taylor-Klaus as his no-nonsense driver. *Thursday, Jan. 2, at 9 p.m., Fox*

77th Annual Golden Globe Awards

Awards season arrives in earnest one weekend into the new year. Ricky Gervais returns as host of Hollywood's most boisterous televised party, as the stars of the big and small screens share the spotlight. *Sunday, Jan. 5, at 8 p.m., NBC*

Other highlights

John Mulaney & the Sack Lunch Bunch

Comedian John Mulaney and a group of hyper-talented kids create a throwback holiday variety show featuring sketches and Broadway-style musical numbers. With special guests including David Byrne and Natasha Lyonne. *Available for streaming Tuesday, Dec. 24, Netflix*

Craft in America

The docuseries devoted to the handmade begins a new season with a look at artists pushing the boundaries of quilting. *Friday, Dec. 27, at 9 p.m., PBS; check local listings*

Live From Lincoln Center: New York Philharmonic—Sondheim

Powerhouse vocalist Katrina Lenk will join the Philharmonic to perform selections from the Stephen Sondheim songbook. *Tuesday, Dec. 31, at 8 p.m., PBS; check local listings*

Show of the week

Doctor Who

And the social media trolls said she wouldn't make a good Doctor. Jodie Whittaker has instead proven immensely likable since stepping into this storied British sci-fi franchise a year ago to play the first female incarnation of the time traveler. In the new season—kicking off on New Year's Day as usual—MI6 turns to the Doctor for help when alien forces begin attacking intelligence agents around the globe. The challenge will require some space travel as well as the aid of the Judoon, a rhino-headed intergalactic police force. *Wednesday, Jan. 1, at 8 p.m., BBC America*



Whittaker steps out with Team Tardis.

LEISURE

Food & Drink

Trend watch: How we ate in 2019



Taste wins out: A power play from Popeyes

The great sandwich wars

Popeyes launched the defining battle of 2019 when it dropped a new sandwich: a crispy fried slab of chicken breast on a toasted brioche bun with pickles and mayonnaise. That was a clear encroachment on territory occupied by Chick-fil-A, and when the widely beloved fast-food chain subtly acknowledged the challenge on Twitter, the contest was on. Consumers chose sides on social media and rushed to Popeyes franchises everywhere to wait out long lines for a taste of the potential usurper. The new sandwich was entirely sold out at one point in August, and when the dust cleared, both Southern-born chains looked like winners, with sales up and all would-be rivals looking like also-rans in a category that was already eating into burger sales.

Faux meat everywhere

A more significant revolution was playing out elsewhere in the fast-food landscape. In August, Burger King brought plant-based meat to the masses when it started selling its Impossible Whopper in 7,200 locations nationwide. Customer response was so robust, it drove the biggest boost in Burger King revenues in four years, and while some patrons claimed not

consume 6.4 billion fast-food burgers annually—behavior is clearly changing. In late August, an Atlanta Kentucky Fried Chicken conducted a test run on plant-based fried chicken and ran out of the Beyond Meat product in just five hours. McDonald's is meanwhile testing its P.L.T. (Plant Lettuce and Tomato) sandwich in Canada. It predicts annual global sales could reach 250 million.

The hard-seltzer bubble

OK, “bubble” might not be the right word. Hard seltzer came out of nowhere this year, but the cans of White Claw or Truly that you probably saw at every summer party signaled a wave too large to evaporate. White Claw claims to have outsold Budweiser at times during the summer, and apparently did so despite widespread shortages. But a reckoning could arrive one day, when drinkers realize that the low-calorie, low-alcohol, slightly sweet, gluten-free beverages aren't much better for them than beer or wine.



The new Bud?

to be fooled by the Impossible's taste and texture, many skeptics were won over. “My senses were instantly blasted with Whopper's trademark wall of flavor,” said David McGrath in the *Chicago Tribune*. “I was not disappointed.” Though beef remains king—Americans

“Ultimately you're still getting drunk,” said Esther Mobley in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, “and there's just no way to spin that as a healthy choice.”

The new asceticism

If there was one new trend in dieting, it was not eating at all. “Intermittent fasting” was the most searched-for diet term on Google in 2019, reflecting new momentum for a concept that started sweeping through Hollywood and the executive set in Silicon Valley a couple of years earlier. *Today* show co-hosts Hoda Kotb and Jenna Bush Hager committed together to giving the practice a whirl, swearing not to eat anything for at least 12 consecutive hours each day. Other methods involve fasting for 24 hours at a time two or three times each week, but in every case the hope is that giving the body a break from digesting food will deliver a range of health benefits. A similar urge to abstain is emerging in Americans' drinking patterns. Young adults who label themselves “sober curious” are swearing off booze for a month or more at a time or curtailing consumption drastically—and bars are responding by developing high-end mocktails and botanical elixirs. Millennials, said Amanda Mull in *The Atlantic*, “might just be tired of drinking so much.”

Ghost restaurants

No, they aren't the spirits of restaurants past. “Ghost restaurants” are operations that prepare meals for delivery customers only, and the growth of online food-delivery services is fueling their spread. A res-

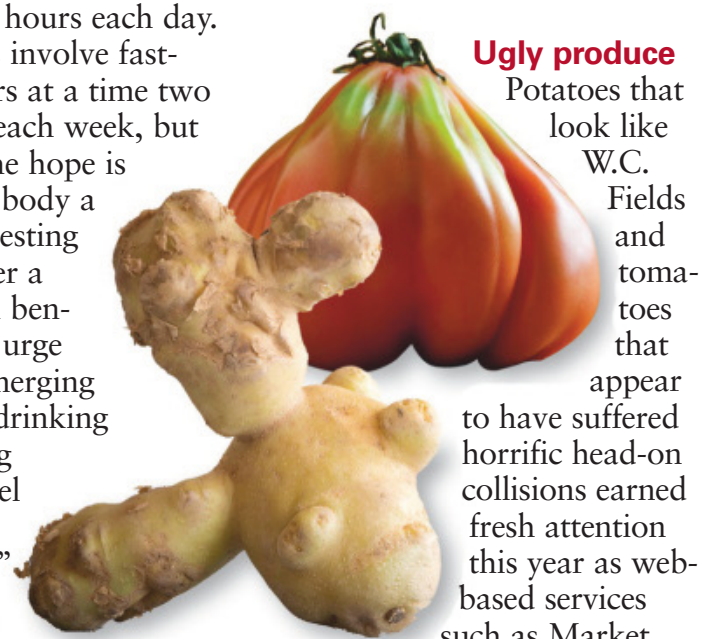


DoorDash Kitchens: Rise of the 'ghosts'

taurant that requires no space for seating and no budget for servers or ambience obviously costs a fraction of what a traditional startup would, and when a menu concept flops, the food can be changed. The potential here is vast, especially considering that the ghosts can keep multiplying after gobbling up a large share of the current take-out trade. As a *Forbes* story predicted, “Eventually, ghost restaurants will start to replace home kitchens.”

Ugly produce

Potatoes that look like W.C. Fields and tomatoes that appear



to have suffered horrific head-on collisions earned fresh attention this year as web-based services such as Market

Misfits and Imperfect Foods popped up, promising to help reduce food waste. The companies box and ship misshapen fruits and veggies to buyers who pay far lower prices than they would for unblemished groceries. Critics claim that most ugly produce has always been used anyway—for products such as juices and salsas. But some farmers say the movement has helped boost wholesale prices, motivating them to harvest some perfectly edible food that would have otherwise been left to rot.

FOOD FUELED MY VOICE.

This is the force behind Grammy-winning opera and some of Manhattan's hippest restaurants. Proper nutrition as a child helped him answer his calling.

Let's feed every dream.

Demand our leaders fuel the potential of every child at [FOODISFUEL.ORG](https://www.foodisfuel.org).



#FOODISFUEL

ALEXANDER SMALLS / Chef/Restaurateur, Opera Singer



This week's dream: Visiting Lapland to meet Father Christmas

A well-timed family trip to northern Finland can be the recipe for months of domestic bliss, said Ed Potton in *The Times* (U.K.). And book as early as possible, then tell the kids right away that you're treating them to a sit-down with Santa Claus at the North Pole. Because, believe me, "nothing enforces good behavior like the threat of withdrawing that golden ticket." Our family of four made the trip in November, flying from London to the northernmost airport in Europe on our way to a mountaintop village 170 miles north of the Arctic Circle. A U.K.-based company, Santa's Lapland, handled every detail, so before takeoff, we followed our pilot's instructions when he urged every passenger to shout, "I believe!"

Though I'd heard rumors of no snow, "the view on landing was reassuringly white: all cotton-wool fir forests and frozen lakes." Green-clad elves greeted us at baggage claim, and full sets of winter wear—



Reindeer transport the guests by sleigh.

snowsuits and fur-lined hats and gloves—awaited us at our hotel. In their borrowed boots, Izzy, 7, and Arlo, 3, tromped with us as we followed a torchlit path to a cabin where we feasted on salmon and berry compote. The next few days were packed with activities—tobogganing, snowmobiling, ice-skating, tandem skiing, lassoing contests. But our favorite adventure was the dogsled ride. The huskies yapped in

excitement before we settled in and took off. "Following twisting paths through the forest, it was thrilling for everyone except Arlo, who fell asleep in seconds, swaddled in a blanket."

When the spirited staff decided we were finally ready to meet You Know Who, "they milked the theater for all it was worth." We boarded a sleigh pulled by a reindeer to a clearing where two elves briefly frolicked in the snow with Izzy and Arlo before directing all of us, in hushed voices, to a cabin where Santa awaited; "the children looked as though they were about to explode." Santa didn't disappoint. He had a full white beard and warm confidence, and after greeting Izzy and Arlo by name pulled from a pocket the wish lists they'd written to him many weeks earlier. "I wish I could meet Santa every day," Izzy said later. A three-day all-inclusive trip to Santa's Lapland (santaslapland.com) costs about \$6,250 for four.

Hotel of the week



Your winter refuge

Niedermairhof

South Tyrol, Italy

Come ski season, "there really is a lodge to suit every style," said Christian Wright in *The New York Times*. This chic bed-and-breakfast in the Italian Alps occupies a centuries-old farmhouse that was recently gut-renovated by the husband-and-wife owners, who've created eight suites that combine bold contemporary detailing and touches of whimsy. Several ski resorts sit nearby, including storied Kronplatz, and the whole area is beautiful. "The best-kept secret: You can walk up to a local hut, eat some Tyrolean dumplings, rent a toboggan for about \$5, and whiz down." whitelinehotels.com; doubles from \$198

Getting the flavor of...

The convenience of Park City

What they say about Park City is so true, said Eric Wilbur in *The Boston Globe*. The Utah ski resort—now the largest in the U.S.—couldn't be easier to reach for anyone flying in from either coast. I've often skied the Rockies before, but I was new to Park City when my wife and I decided to treat our children to their first trip out West. Flying into Salt Lake City from Boston, we were, as is promised, "on the slopes by lunchtime"—arriving by shuttle at the Westgate Resort & Spa at 11 a.m. The local shopping and dining options gave my wife plenty to do between spa treatments, and the kids and I relished Utah's famous champagne powder and Park City's 7,300 skiable acres. On our last day, we refueled at Drafts Burger Bar before catching a bus to the airport. "No rental car, no traffic headaches. It was all so easy that I jumped at the opportunity to return to Park City, sans family, some six weeks later."

Vermont's 'Queen City'

A travel writer isn't supposed to fall in love with a town, said Melanie Kaplan in *The Washington Post*. But during a recent week in Burlington, Vt., "I felt an unfamiliar tug in my heart." The city of 43,000 on Lake Champlain is simply that appealing, "a serene playground" for folks who enjoy outdoor activities, and home to diverse dining and entertainment scenes. The college town that elected Bernie Sanders mayor four times is also the birthplace of Phish and Ben & Jerry's, and its residents know how to have fun. In the winter, they ski Stowe, sled in Oakledge Park, and pack Gutterson Fieldhouse to watch University of Vermont hockey games. Church Street Marketplace, a pedestrian-only shopping district, is always bustling, and you catch snippets of French from visiting Montrealers. And though there's also no shortage of buzzworthy dining options, hitting Myer's for a dozen Montreal-style bagels is "the best \$10 you can spend."

Last-minute holiday travel deals

Christmas in the capital

At the five-star Jefferson Hotel, the presidential suite comes with a personal violinist if you book the \$15,000-a-night "Sounds of the Holidays" offer. Also included: a keyboard loaded with Christmas songs. Book by Dec. 30. (202) 448-2300

An impeachment special

Stay at the Watergate Hotel in D.C. and for \$2,500 a night you can sleep in the Scandal Room, site of the infamous 1972 break-in by Nixon election operatives, and have drinks in the lobby bar with the two arresting officers. (877) 930-2938

A haute Manhattan holiday

Through Jan. 15, the Mark Hotel, off Central Park, is offering a \$250,000 penthouse package featuring a terrace skating rink, a personal pianist, an in-suite *Nutcracker* performance, and a private meal prepared by Jean-Georges Vongerichten. themarkhotel.com

Holiday gifts...for those who have everything



Vanderhall Venice Speedster

Not just a retro-style beauty, "the Vanderhall Venice Speedster is as much fun as you can have on three wheels." The Utah-built weekender has a wooden steering wheel, chrome switches, a 180-hp engine, and no top or doors: You simply step into the leather-lined cockpit and go.

From \$26,950, vanderhallusa.com

Source: Road & Track



Miansai Party Animal

Crack open this 18-karat-gold piñata and it will rain 50 tiny diamonds.

Made to be worn as a necklace locket, the 2.5-inch-tall figurine was created by a Miami-based jeweler that has been playfully branching out in unexpected ways.

\$85,000, miansai.com

Source: RobbReport.com

Le Corbusier Watches From Rado

Legendary Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier had a rainbow all his own.

This set of nine ultrathin precision Swiss timepieces takes cues from a coordinated color system he developed to meet designers' every need. And because the watch cases are ceramic, they "will retain their luster more or less indefinitely."

\$18,900, rado.com

Source: Bloomberg.com



Vaonis Stellina

With a few taps, this "idiot-proof" telescope can locate galaxies, nebulae, and star clusters—and can photograph them, too. Homemade astrophotography setups yield better images, but the app-controlled Stellina works straight out of the box.

\$4,000, vaonis.com

Source: Gizmodo.com

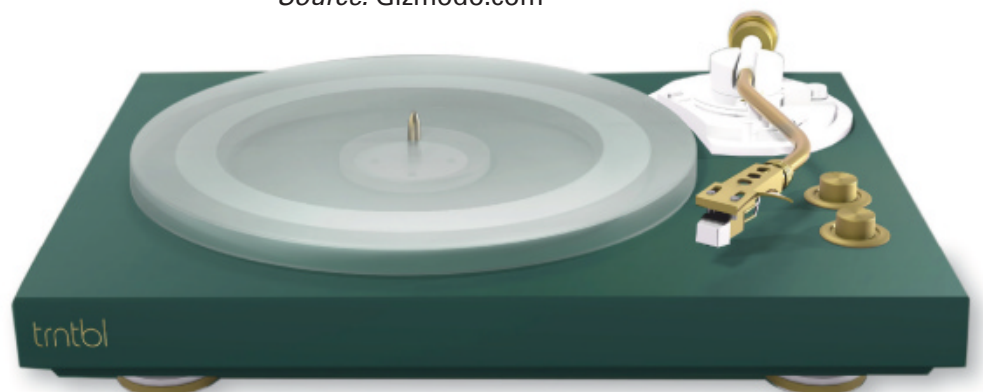


Federico Pazienza Terra-cotta Jug

Created by an Italian designer based in Rotterdam, this hand-painted 9-inch-tall vessel recalls a time when people viewed everyday objects as magical. The scenes and silhouettes of his Material Spirits line are inspired by the pottery of ancient Greece, where a jug like this, called a *lekythos*, was used to store olive oil.

\$894, federicopazienza.com

Source: Elle Décor



TRNTBL Record Player

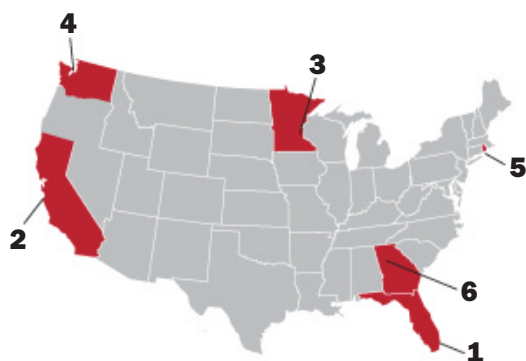
There's never been a more stylish way to listen to vinyl. This wireless turntable is designed to pair with Sonos audio systems or any Bluetooth speakers, and it can create Spotify playlists from the records it spins.

From \$449, trntbl.co

Source: Forbes.com

This week: The best homes of the year

1 **◀ Miami** This four-bedroom Mediterranean home in Upper Morningside was built in 1930. The Spanish-influenced house has a tile roof, a tower entry, arched doorways, a chef's kitchen with tile walls, and a master suite with dressing room. French doors lead out to a patio with a pool and water feature, and there's a one-bedroom guest-house. \$1,670,000. Nancy Batchelor, BHHS EWM Realty, (305) 903-2850 **Status: Sold**



2 **▶ Big Sur, Calif.** Mickey Muennig, architect of the Post Ranch Inn, designed this 1998 three-bedroom home near Pfeiffer Beach. The house, constructed of redwood, concrete, and steel, has radiant concrete floors, organic-shaped rooms, exposed beams, and floor-to-ceiling glass walls. The verdant 20-acre property includes an indoor/outdoor hot tub, a two-car garage with titanium doors, and a 7-kilowatt solar farm. \$4,995,000. Bambace Peterson Team, Compass, (831) 200-3178 **Status: Reduced to \$4,895,000**

3 **▶ Minneapolis**

Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1951, the Frieda and Henry J. Neils House is on the National Register of Historic Places. The three-bedroom Usonian home has a jutting eave, red concrete floors with radiant heating, original built-ins of western larch, a great room with vaulted ceilings, and floor-to-ceiling windows facing Cedar Lake. The 0.5-acre wooded property includes a carport, deck, patio, and lawn. \$2,750,000. Julie Regan, Lakes Sotheby's International Realty, (952) 500-1939

Status: Same



4 ► Bainbridge Island, Wash. Designed by Eggleston/Farkas Architects in 2005, this steel-frame, three-bedroom house is cantilevered above a historic bunker and is walking distance to Fort Ward Park. Floor-to-ceiling windows frame Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains, and the interior is finished in Brazilian cherry wood, travertine, blackened steel, and granite. Outside are a deck and 1.5 wooded, landscaped acres. \$1,738,000. Claudia Powers, Realogics Sotheby's International Realty, (206) 321-8124

Status: Sold



Steal of the week



5 ▲ Block Island, R.I. Designed by Christopher H.L. Owen, this 1975 three-bedroom house received an American Institute of Architects award. The modern design features curves, a cantilevered deck, walls of windows with ocean and island views, and a living room with double-height ceilings and open layout. The 3.2-acre property includes lawns, mature trees, and a stone patio. \$1,825,000. Rosemary Tobin, Lila Delman Real Estate/Christie's International Real Estate, (401) 741-1825

Status: Reduced to \$1,650,000



6 ▲ Atlanta This 1920 Craftsman bungalow is near parks, shopping, transit, bike trails, and the Beltline. The three-bedroom, open-plan home features dark hardwood floors throughout

and a kitchen with granite counters and stainless appliances. Outside are a covered front porch with a sitting area and a large fenced backyard ringed by mature trees. \$330,000. Dustin Kimberley, Beacham and Co. Realtors, (470) 201-9056 **Status: Sold**

BUSINESS

The news at a glance

The bottom line

■ Last year, \$369 billion in merchandise, or 10 percent of total retail sales, was returned in the U.S., up from \$260 billion in 2015. UPS expects to handle more than 1 million such packages every day, reaching a peak of 1.9 million on Jan. 2. *Bloomberg.com*

■ The Hallmark Channel produced 40 separate holiday movies for its annual "Countdown to Christmas" bonanza, with an average budget of \$2 million. The ad revenue for Hallmark in 2018? \$600 million. *Qz.com*

■ Some \$9 billion has been raised on the charitable crowdfunding site GoFundMe through more than 120 million donations since 2010. This year, a fundraiser was started every eight seconds. *People.com*



■ Americans will spend \$75.38 billion on their pets this year, according to the American Pet Products Association, a 3.8 percent increase from the year before. Some 59 percent of dog owners say they will buy their pooch a holiday gift. *Fortune.com*

■ About 400 of America's largest corporations paid an average federal tax rate of 11.3 percent on their profits last year, roughly half the rate established under the 2017 tax law. Ninety-one Fortune 500 companies paid no federal tax at all. *The Washington Post*

■ Turvo, a Silicon Valley software startup, fired its CEO after he expensed \$76,120 at strip clubs over a three-year span, representing more than half the company's \$125,000 in entertainment expenditures. *Bloomberg.com*

Trade: U.S. reaches narrow deal with China

After seesawing negotiations, the U.S. and China reached a "limited" trade agreement last week that will halt a 19-month trade war, said **William Mauldin** in *The Wall Street Journal*. The deal—which President Trump called "phenomenal"—retains a 25 percent tariff on \$250 billion of Chinese goods as "leverage in future negotiations."

But the United States "canceled plans to impose fresh tariffs on \$156 billion" in consumer products that were scheduled to take effect Dec. 15, and halved tariffs on another \$120 billion in imports. China agreed to step up U.S. farm purchases but didn't offer the "kind of long-term economic changes that U.S. officials have said are needed to level the playing field for businesses."



A trans-Pacific tariff truce

nothing to put the brakes on China's advance as an "economic superpower." If anything, Trump's trade wars have made China stronger; thanks to Trump's bullying, "our allies have learned not to trust us." The U.S. is declaring victory and going home, leaving China "jubilant and even incredulous" at how little it had to give up.

Trump lost his trade war, said **Paul Krugman** in *The New York Times*. First and foremost, the point of this whole battle was cutting the trade deficit. "So it's remarkable to note that the trade deficit has risen, not fallen, on Trump's watch, from \$544 billion in 2016 to \$691 billion in the 12 months." The deal does

Boeing: Suspending 737 Max production

Boeing said this week it will temporarily halt production of its troubled 737 Max jets with nearly 400 finished planes still undelivered, said **Andrew Tangel** in *The Wall Street Journal*. The company has been assembling "around 40 planes a month at its plant near Seattle since the Max was grounded globally in March following two fatal crashes." Building and storing the undelivered jets has cost the company \$4.4 billion a quarter. Boeing said that the 12,000 workers on the 737 Max will be reassigned. However, "production of the Max also supports thousands of jobs across a network of over 600 suppliers."

Advertising: Hallmark's same-sex controversy

Hallmark apologized for pulling four TV ads featuring two brides kissing in a same-sex ceremony, said **Aimee Ortiz** in *The New York Times*. The ads from Zola, a wedding site, feature couples standing and kissing at the altar and appeared on the Hallmark Channel, a holiday-time cable ratings leader. The conservative group One Million Moms published a petition calling for the commercials to be removed. Hallmark initially complied, saying the women's "public display of affection" violated the channel's policies, but reversed its decision after a backlash.

Energy: Sanctions too late to stop Russian pipeline

Congress this week passed a bill that includes sanctions on companies working on a Russian gas pipeline to Germany, said **Holly Ellyatt** in *CNBC.com*, but they come too late to stop the controversial project. Already "90 percent complete," the Nord Stream 2 pipeline will let "Russia increase its energy dominance in Europe" while bypassing Ukraine, which now gets \$3 billion from Russian gas transit fees. Despite the sanctions, the pipeline is expected to start operation in mid-2020, and another Russian gas pipeline, through Turkey, will open in January.

Gig economy: Writers, photographers sue California

Two organizations that represent freelance journalists filed a lawsuit this week arguing that California's new gig-worker law, AB5, is unconstitutional, said **Suhauna Hussain** in the *Los Angeles Times*. Following a lawsuit by the California Trucking Association, it is the second legal challenge to AB5, which was promoted as a way to protect independent contractors for companies like Uber or Lyft. The new suit stakes out a First Amendment claim, arguing that the law, which limits news outlets to publishing "35 pieces per year from an individual freelance writer" before classifying the writer as an employee, violates free speech rights. Uber is funding a ballot initiative to overturn the law in 2020.

Putting a price on your good name

Wealthy executives and other public figures are hiring people to write flattering fake news articles to show up high on Google searches, said **Rachael Levy** in *The Wall Street Journal*. **Jacob Gottlieb**, whose hedge fund, Visium Asset Management, was liquidated following an insider-trading scandal in 2016, wanted to bury the undesirable results he found when typing his name into Google. He hired a "reputation management" company, Status Labs, to place fawning—or simply false—content about him "on websites masquerading as news outlets." One article appeared on a site called *Medical Daily Times* about a donation to New York University's medical school. But NYU said the information was inaccurate, and "the phone number for *Medical Daily Times* on its website rang at a pizzeria in Toronto." Other former clients of Status Labs include billionaire **Ken Griffin** and Education Secretary **Betsy DeVos**.

THE WEEK

Give someone you know

some presents of mind ...

THE WEEK is the perfect way to remember and reward everyone in your life, not once but 51 times in the coming year. And now it couldn't be easier.

Go online to give a gift at [GiveTheWeek.com](https://www.givetheweek.com).



Visit our online gift center at
[GiveTheWeek.com](https://www.givetheweek.com)

Bad bosses: Will they ever reform?

“Why do we lionize bad bosses?” asked Rebecca Traister in *New York Magazine*. “From Scrooge McDuck to Dabney Coleman in *9 to 5*,” Americans have let terrible supervisors get away with systematic cruelty because they make great characters. On *The Apprentice*, Donald Trump played a “brittle and shallow” boss who loved firing people. Bosses now know they will be punished for discriminating by gender or race. So the lesson “for those with power and the instinct to abuse it” is that anything goes, so long as they mistreat *everyone*.



Some companies leave workers crying at their desks.

For a vivid story of how bosses can go wrong, said Zoe Schiffer in *The Verge.com*, look at the luggage retailer Away, a company with a brand that consumers loved, built in a “toxic work environment” that employees feared. The \$1.4 billion startup’s culture was supposed to be based on “inclusiveness.” In reality, that meant employees were discouraged from communicating one-on-one and felt as if they were under “constant surveillance.” CEO Steph Korey “was infamous for tearing into people” in public, calling one worker “brain dead.” Away’s so-called core values became a cudgel used to browbeat workers. In one series of messages that began at 3 a.m., Korey wrote, “In an effort to support you in developing your skills, I am going to help you learn the career skill of *accountability*,” before revoking their right to any paid time off. Employees were to told “utilize your *empower-*

ment” to work massive amounts of overtime—or get fired. Korey stepped down after our story on the company ran, but not before many employees had left. “Never work for your dream brand,” one former Away marketing manager said. “It’ll kill you.”

The story of Away should be a cue for “other hard-driving bosses to take a closer look at some unexamined behaviors,” said Sarah Green Carmichael in *Bloomberg.com*. For example, “consider the common practice of sending

round-the-clock messages to staff,” which puts exhausted managers at risk of sending something they’ll later regret. Underpaying and overworking employees in order to stay “lean” also has costs: There is no prize “going to the company with the most burned-out employees.”

Not everyone in the startup world felt the criticism of Away was fair, said Jason Shen in *Fast Company*. “People are getting soft,” one tech investor told me after hearing about the issues at Away. In the startup world, many founders and investors believe that “making a dent in the universe is hard and employees should expect to work tirelessly.” But maybe we can all agree that at the very least “employees should expect to work somewhere free of verbal abuse, emotional manipulation, or extended unpaid overtime.”

What the experts say

Bad financial advice for teachers

High-fee investments are leaving teachers with dramatically smaller nest eggs for their retirement plans, said Gretchen Morgenson and Anne Tergesen in *The Wall Street Journal*. Teachers with 403(b) accounts—government employees’ equivalent of the 401(k)—typically have more than half their assets invested in annuities, which carry costs as high as 3 percent a year. “In contrast, fees on 401(k) accounts average less than 1 percent.” For a typical account, over 25 years “an extra two percentage points in fees would cut 38 percent from the final account value.” Some school districts also hire middlemen who “help teachers and other school employees choose investments.” These “third-party administrators” promise independent advice—but are sometimes paid extra by mutual fund companies to steer teachers into higher-cost accounts.

Investing while black

Secret recordings at a Phoenix bank branch reveal “what racism in the banking industry sounds like,” said Emily Flitter in *The New York Times*. Jimmy Kennedy, a former NFL lineman, started recording conversations with his financial adviser at JPMorgan Chase after

he moved \$800,000 into the bank but “kept getting the runaround” about becoming a private client, a status “reserved for accounts with more than \$250,000.” When he tried to find out why, Kennedy, who is black, was told that “bank employees were scared of dealing with him.” “We’re in Arizona,” the adviser said. “I don’t have to tell you about what the demographics are in Arizona. They don’t see people like you a lot.”

Kansas wants you, America

Topeka will pay you up to \$15,000 to move there, said Kevin Hardy in *The Kansas City Star*. With the state capital’s unemployment rate at 2.9 percent, near a 10-year low, businesses are struggling to fill openings and attract new talent. The “Choose Topeka” program, approved last week, offers up to \$15,000 to pay for moving expenses for anyone who buys a primary home in the city, and \$10,000 for people who rent. One caveat before you rush to pack up your stuff: The program has only \$300,000 in its coffers for the first year. The city’s difficulties mirror those of many smaller cities in an increasingly centralized economy. Topeka’s not Kansas City, one local business leader says, where “you have a 2 million-plus metro, which sells itself.”

Charity of the week



Since 1988, **Family Promise** has helped homeless families through a three-pronged strategy of preventing eviction, providing shelter, and helping secure a home. The organization’s more than 200 local affiliates offer temporary housing in shelters, houses of worship, and private homes, as well as transportation, child care, and connections to local social-service agencies. Family Promise chapters have opened day centers where the homeless can shower and do laundry. The organization’s main goal, however, is to help people find housing; it has helped 88 percent of the families in its programs do that. You can donate directly to local chapters through the **Help Us Move In (helpusmovein.org)** program, which matches donations raised locally by Family Promise affiliates.

Each charity we feature has earned a four-star overall rating from Charity Navigator, which rates not-for-profit organizations on the strength of their finances, their governance practices, and the transparency of their operations. Four stars is the group’s highest rating.

Markets: An unexpected decade of prosperity

Hold the champagne: Investors don't want this decade to end, said **Lu Wang** in *Bloomberg Businessweek*. "Stocks in the S&P 500 have returned 249 percent in the past 10 years." That's not just better than the historical average—it's happened without the stomach-churning dips the stock market has delivered in other periods. Not every day was smooth sailing. "There was the May 2010 flash crash, Europe's sovereign debt crisis in 2011 and 2012, and China's currency devaluation in 2015." But ultimately the 2010s turned out to be "the first decade without a bear market"—the market *never* fell more than 20 percent from its peak. Even through a trade war and global recession jitters, "magically, the bull market has endured."



The market's rally started in 2009, and just kept going.

In the near term, economists believe that "the more than decade-old bull market still has room to run," said **Martha White** in *NBCNews.com*. Many of the experts who in the spring predicted a recession for 2020 have changed their tune, and last month's robust jobs report has made economists much more optimistic. Most analysts now forecast one of three outcomes, said **Paul Davidson** in *USA Today*. Optimists envision the manufacturing sector springing back to life as the trade war fades. Pessimists note that consumer confidence and the share of Americans who say they are "planning to buy homes, cars, and appliances" have fallen. A partial trade agreement with China still leaves "a fog of uncertainty," but the prevailing view is that the economy will keep growing in 2020—but modestly.

The next decade, though, is a different matter, said **Nir Kaissar** in *Bloomberg.com*. "The surprising rally from the rubble of the 2008 financial crisis has touched off a fierce debate about what fueled the resurgence." There are a lot of theories: Did low interest rates "goose the market"? Were earnings boosted by stock buybacks? Was it hypergrowth for "a handful" of tech companies? The simplest explanation is just that U.S. companies had a very profitable decade. But profits are more volatile than most investors think, and "it's unlikely that the last decade's earn-

ings growth will spill into the next." Investors should "grit their teeth for a low-return decade," said **Robin Wigglesworth** in the *Financial Times*. Interest rates are almost certain to rise, along with corporate tax rates. More Baby Boomers are retiring, "sapping economies of their vim." Protectionist policies will remain popular. The "realistic assumption" is that the party is ending.

Then again, economists predicted that the last decade would be a long period of stagnation, said **Greg Ip** in *The Wall Street Journal*—and they "got the decade all wrong." Even as the 2010s progressed, experts kept underestimating the recovery. Most economists expected unemployment "to bottom out around 5 percent." Instead, it's now at a 50-year low, and "likely headed lower." The expansion of the past 10 years is "the longest since records begin in the mid-1800s." Whether it marks a transformation in the economy or just a phase in the economic cycle is something we won't know until another decade has passed.

The world gives up on free trade

Peter Goodman
The New York Times

Britain's voters have made clear that the era of global economic integration is over, said Peter Goodman. The commanding victory for British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his Conservative Party ensures a "splintering of the European trading bloc" and "the most consequential upsurge of economic nationalism in generations." For decades after World War II, the international order was built on free trade as the alternative to centuries of international conflict. The new world order, by contrast, is based on Trumpian thinking: "Multilateralism is for suckers." Trump imposes tariffs by fiat, justifying them on national-security grounds. Now Britain is headed down a similar path,

abandoning Europe in the hope it can hammer out better bilateral trade agreements with nations like India, Australia, China, and the U.S. China, meanwhile, has come to see trade hostilities "as part of an American bullying campaign" and has launched its own nationalist response. Economists "point to history, notably the Great Depression, which was deepened by a wave of tit-for-tat trade protectionism," for a hint of where all this can lead. But the public isn't listening. Trump's trade war is applauded by his base, while across Europe "furious popular movements have fixed on trade as a threat to workers' livelihoods." Globalization, it seems, had a good run.

Silicon Valley can do better than this

Derek Thompson
The Atlantic.com

Whatever happened to the new industrial revolution that Big Tech promised us? asked Derek Thompson. "For decades, we've turned to Silicon Valley to show us the future of American endeavor." But while tech's innovations have made "a handful of people quite rich," they haven't offset manufacturing's decline or done anything for "deteriorating infrastructure, climate change, low growth, rising economic inequality." The machinery of today's physical world—lights, automobiles, airplanes, subways—was the product of 19th- and 20th-century innovation, not bytes and code. Technology advocates argue that coding has "increased human ingenuity by allowing individuals

to tinker, talk, and trade with unprecedented ease." But Americans today are far less likely to start a company than they were in the 1980s. It's not hard to understand why: Silicon Valley has produced über-monopolies that "have grown so large that they scare off entrepreneurs in their path." Much of Silicon Valley's effort is now devoted to companies such as Uber, DoorDash, and TaskRabbit that make "yuppie life convenient." In the next decade, I'd like to see Silicon Valley "deepen its investments in biotech" or construction automation, or carbon capture. It's time to find out "what could be accomplished if American ingenuity came back down to Earth."

Among those who died in 2019...

Media and publishing

Mary Oliver, Pulitzer-winning poet whose lyrical descriptions of nature drew a national audience, died Jan. 17, age 83.

Russell Baker, irreverent journalist who wrote *The New York Times*' "Observer" column for 36 years, covering everything from political scandals to indestructible fruit-cake, died Jan. 21, age 93.

Dan Jenkins, sports reporter whose smart, snarky coverage of football and golf defined the heyday of *Sports Illustrated*, died March 7, age 90.

Herman Wouk, proudly traditional author who wrote the World War II epics *The Winds of War* and *War and Remembrance*, died May 17, age 103.



Judith Krantz, best-selling *Scruples* novelist who told steamy tales of wealth, sex, and shopping, died June 22, age 91.

Toni Morrison (pictured), Nobel laureate in literature who gave voice to the African-American experience in *Beloved* and other acclaimed novels, died Aug. 5, age 88.

Robert Frank, documentary photographer who made the ordinary seem extraordinary in his 1959 book *The Americans*, died Sept. 9, age 94.

Cokie Roberts, trailblazing political journalist with NPR and ABC News who won three Emmys in a five-decade career, died Sept. 17, age 75.

Harold Bloom, literary critic and Yale professor who championed the Western canon, died Oct. 14, age 89.

Stage and screen

Carol Channing, Broadway legend who played the titular matchmaker in *Hello Dolly!* more than 5,000 times, died Jan. 15, age 97.

Stanley Donen, master of the Hollywood musical, who directed Gene Kelly in *Singin' in the Rain* and Fred Astaire dancing on the ceiling in *Royal Wedding*, died Feb. 21, age 94.

John Singleton, groundbreaking filmmaker whose gritty debut, *Boyz n the Hood*,

earned him an Oscar nomination for Best Director, a first for an African-American, died April 28, age 51.



Peter Mayhew, 7-foot-3 actor who played Chewbacca, Han Solo's towering, furry sidekick in *Star Wars*, died April 30, age 74.

Doris Day (pictured), actress and singer whose wholesome onscreen personality and honey voice made her America's top box-office star in the early 1960s, died May 13, age 97.

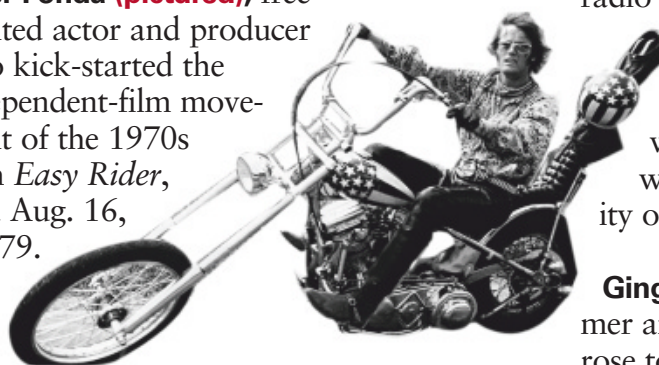
Rip Torn, feisty actor who won an Emmy for his role as Artie the producer on *The Larry Sanders Show*, died July 9, age 88.

Rutger Hauer, Hollywood's go-to villain who played a psychopathic hitchhiker in *The Hitcher* and a murderous android in *Blade Runner*, died July 19, age 75.

Hal Prince, producer and director who helped create some of Broadway's most enduring hits, including *Cabaret* and *The Phantom of the Opera*, died July 31, age 91.

D.A. Pennebaker, pioneering documentary filmmaker who got up close with Bob Dylan in *Don't Look Back*, died Aug. 1, age 94.

Peter Fonda (pictured), free-spirited actor and producer who kick-started the independent-film movement of the 1970s with *Easy Rider*, died Aug. 16, age 79.



Valerie Harper, Emmy-winning actress who played the relatable, wisecracking Rhoda Morgenstern on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *Rhoda*, died Aug. 30, age 80.

Diahann Carroll, actress and singer who became the first African-American woman to take the lead in a sitcom with 1968's *Julia*, died Oct. 4, age 84.

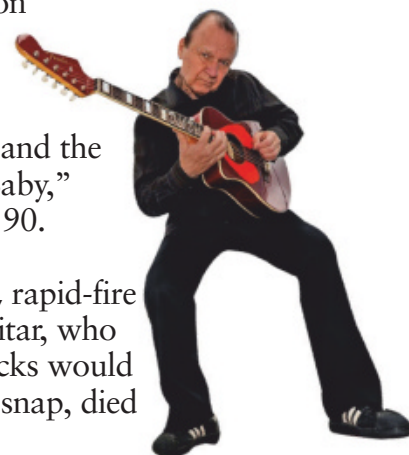
Caroll Spinney, puppeteer who voiced and performed *Sesame Street*'s Big Bird and Oscar the Grouch for nearly 50 years, died Dec. 8, age 85.

Music and the arts

André Previn, musical polymath who cut a path through the worlds of Hollywood, jazz, pop, and classical music as a pianist, composer, and conductor, died Feb. 28, age 89.

Hal Blaine, elite session drummer who laid down the beat on some 35,000 songs, including the Beach Boys' "Good Vibrations" and the Ronettes' "Be My Baby," died March 11, age 90.

Dick Dale (pictured), rapid-fire King of the Surf Guitar, who played so fast his picks would melt and his strings snap, died March 16, age 81.



Dan Robbins, artist who tried to make "every man a Rembrandt" with his invention of paint-by-number kits in the 1950s, died April 1, age 93.

Dr. John, pianist and singer who mixed boogie-woogie, swamp blues, and R&B to create a musical gumbo that embodied his native New Orleans, died June 6, age 77.

João Gilberto, Brazilian guitar virtuoso who turned the world on to bossa nova, died July 6, age 88.

Ric Ocasek, frontman of new wave sensations the Cars, who wrote the ubiquitous radio hits "Just What I Needed" and "Drive," died Sept. 15, age 75.

Jessye Norman, operatic soprano who dazzled audiences and critics with the sheer power and versatility of her voice, died Sept. 30, age 74.

Ginger Baker, virtuosic drummer and rock wild man who rose to fame in the supergroup Cream, died Oct. 6, age 80.

Alicia Alonso (pictured), almost-blind Cuban dancer who was named prima ballerina assoluta—the highest honor in ballet—and founded the National Ballet of Cuba, died Oct. 17, age 98.

Irving Burgie, singer, lyricist, and composer who wrote Harry Belafonte's smash "Day-O (The Banana Boat Song)" and got the world grooving to Caribbean rhythms, died Nov. 29, age 95.

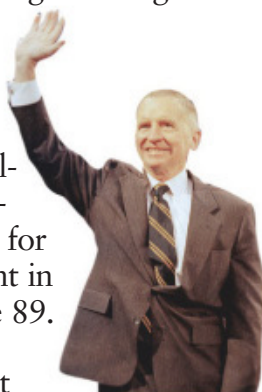


Politics

Bernice Sandler, academic and activist who championed women's rights on campus and was hailed as the "godmother of Title IX," died Jan. 5, age 90.

John Dingell Jr., tenacious Michigan Democrat who pushed landmark legislation—including Medicaid and Medicare—and became Congress' longest-serving member, died Feb. 7, age 92.

Ross Perot (pictured), Texas gadfly who made billions selling computer software before twice running for president as an independent in the 1990s, died July 9, age 89.



John Paul Stevens, centrist Supreme Court justice who evolved into a liberal icon and frequent dissenter during his 35 years on the bench, died July 16, age 99.

David Koch, billionaire industrialist and philanthropist who funded a right-wing libertarian movement that reshaped American politics, died Aug. 23, age 79.

Elijah Cummings, 13-term congressman from Baltimore who investigated President Trump as chair of the House Oversight Committee, died Oct. 17, age 68.

William Ruckelshaus, incorruptible Republican who battled pollution as the EPA's founding head and defied President Richard Nixon during Watergate as deputy attorney general, died Nov. 27, age 87.

Paul Volcker, Federal Reserve chairman who tamed runaway inflation and sought to rein in risk-taking bankers, died Dec. 8, age 92.

Sports

Frank Robinson (pictured), legendary outfielder who smashed 586 home runs, helped the Baltimore Orioles win two World Series, and became the first black manager in the majors, died Feb. 7, age 83.

Julia Ruth Stevens, Babe Ruth's adopted daughter, who authored three books about the legendary home run hitter, died March 9, age 102.

Marilynn Smith, Hall of Fame golfer who put women on an even par by co-founding the Ladies Professional



Golf Association, died April 9, age 89.

Forrest Gregg, famously tough lineman with Vince Lombardi's Green Bay Packers dynasty of the 1960s, who played in a record-setting 188 consecutive games, died April 12, age 85.

John Havlicek, inexhaustible basketball star who propelled the Boston Celtics to eight NBA championships and who remains the team's all-time leading scorer, died April 25, age 79.

Niki Lauda, Austrian Formula One driver who was horrifically burned in a 1976 crash, but was back behind the wheel six weeks later, winning the world championship the following year, died May 20, age 70.

Bart Starr, inspirational quarterback who led the Green Bay Packers to five league championships and wins in the first two Super Bowls, died May 26, age 85.

Nick Buoniconti, linebacker who anchored the Miami Dolphins' defense during the team's glory years in the 1970s, died July 30, age 78.

Davo Karnicar, daredevil Slovenian skier who made the first nonstop ski descent of Mount Everest, died Sept. 16, age 56.

Harrison Dillard, former Buffalo Soldier in World War II who became the only Olympic athlete to win gold in both the sprints and high hurdles, died Nov. 15, age 96.

Fred Cox, star placekicker with the Minnesota Vikings who helped invent the Nerf football, died Nov. 20, age 80.

Business

John Bogle, Vanguard Group founder who made investing accessible by creating the low-cost index fund, died Jan. 16, age 89.

Florence Knoll Bassett, architect who designed the open-plan workspace and transformed office culture, died Jan. 25, age 101.

Karl Lagerfeld, acid-tongued couturier who revived a fading Chanel and, in the process, made luxury fashion a commercial juggernaut, died Feb. 19, age 85.



Gloria Vanderbilt (pictured), socialite heiress and gossip-column favorite who spun her celebrity into a \$150 million-a-year fashion empire, died June 17, age 95.

Lee Iacocca, auto executive who launched the Ford Mustang and made debt-laden Chrysler profitable again in one of the greatest corporate turnarounds of all time, died July 2, age 94.

T. Boone Pickens, brash oil magnate who became a daring corporate raider and, later, an early investor in renewable energy, died Sept. 11, age 91.

Gert Boyle, self-proclaimed "tough mother" who turned her family firm, Columbia Sportswear, into a \$3 billion giant, died Nov. 3, age 95.

Jake Burton Carpenter, entrepreneur who designed the modern snowboard and built a sporting empire with Burton Snowboards, died Nov. 20, age 65.

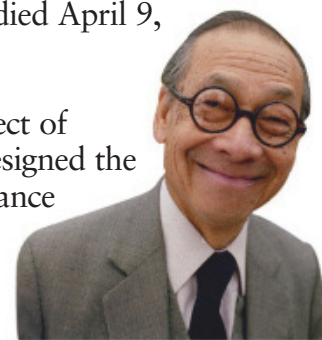
General

Tony Mendez, CIA agent who helped smuggle six American diplomats out of Iran during the 1979–81 hostage crisis by posing as a movie director, inspiring the movie *Argo*, died Jan. 19, age 78.

Lewis Judd, psychiatrist who sought to destigmatize mental illness by exploring the biological causes of conditions such as depression, showing them to be just like other diseases, died Feb. 10, age 88.

Richard Cole, co-pilot of the lead bomber in the daring 1942 Doolittle Raid, the first U.S. counterattack on the Japanese mainland after Pearl Harbor, died April 9, age 103.

I.M. Pei (pictured), architect of geometric beauty who designed the glass pyramid at the entrance to the Louvre in Paris, died May 16, age 102.



Robert Morgenthau, Manhattan district attorney who brought mobsters and white-collar crooks to justice during his 35 years in office, died July 21, age 99.

Aleksei Leonov, Soviet cosmonaut who in 1965 became the first person to walk in space, died Oct. 11, age 85.

Pete Frates, former college baseball player with ALS who promoted the Ice Bucket Challenge, helping to raise \$100 million to fight the disease, died Dec. 9, age 34.

It's never quiet on Ukraine's Russian front

The Trump administration kept military aid in limbo for months to pressure Ukraine's new president, said journalist Christopher Miller in BuzzFeedNews.com. Meanwhile, on the front lines, Ukrainians are still dying.

NOVOOLEKSANDRIVKA, Ukraine—When he's not engaged in gun battles with Russian-led forces on Ukraine's eastern front line, Stas, a scruffy 26-year-old soldier, likes to cozy up in his bunker and brush up on his English skills by watching Stephen Colbert and *Saturday Night Live*. He cracks up at Alec Baldwin's portrayal of President Donald Trump.

Watching political satire on American TV—when he's able to get a strong enough signal on the battlefield to access YouTube—is also how Stas learned that Trump had frozen \$391 million in U.S. security aid meant for the Ukrainian armed forces over the summer. The news made him angry. The fighting was hot at the time, and he and his fellow soldiers were stuck with second-rate gear.

"Look at this. It's old and falling apart," he complained of his Ukrainian government-issued bulletproof vest in accented English. It was barely stitched together and slouching on one side. "It's a piece of s---."

There's one thing Stas and the soldiers in Ukraine's 72nd Mechanized Brigade positioned in the village of Novooleksandrivka do have, which they say has helped them spot enemy soldiers who creep within grenade-throwing range of their trenches at night: a pair of U.S.-made night-vision sights. The only problem? They don't fit on the Ukrainian rifles.

He explained that "they would definitely be more effective if we had them on our rifles," which is impossible without a special adapter. He demonstrated how he has to hold the sight in one hand, pick a target, lower the device from his eye, and try to remember where he was looking as he aims and fires his weapon. "Nobody in your country knows what's happening here," Stas continued, waving his arms in frustration. "They don't know how we are fighting for our lives with almost nothing."

Fought for more than five years in trenches cut through some of Europe's most fertile farmland, Russia's war in the eastern Ukrainian region of Donbass has killed around 14,000 people and brought under



Stas: Trying to hold the line, with night-vision sights that don't fit his gun.

Russian control a chunk of a territory larger than the state of New Jersey. Yet—despite being fought with \$1.6 billion of U.S. help since 2014—the war had largely been forgotten in the U.S. before it was catapulted into the headlines by revelations that President Trump froze U.S. security aid for Ukraine to pressure the country's new president, Volodymyr Zelensky, into investigating Trump's political rival.

The aid freeze was overturned in September, but the damage had already been done. "While they were playing with our aid, I wonder, did they know we were dying out here?" asked Oleksandr, a sergeant in the 14th Mechanized Brigade who goes by the call sign "kuvyrok," or "somersault." As we crept through trenches outside the village of Krymske, 40 miles northwest of Stas' position, careful to keep our heads down and out of Russian snipers' sights, Oleksandr said at least two soldiers were killed at the position over the summer.

The warring sides in Krymske, which is accessible only over a cratered dirt road that winds through a field of dead sunflowers, are so close that they can see each with the naked eye across a desolate no-man's-land where only feral dogs dare to roam. Underscoring the danger there, in the days after I visited his position, the brigade lost two more men, including 32-year-old Artem Sokolov, who was killed by a sniper.

The soldiers, whom I met over the course of a week in October while traveling along the snaking 250-mile front line in eastern Ukraine, painted a clear picture of just how

important U.S. military assistance is for Ukraine in its war against Russia. The soldiers spoke on the condition that their surnames not be used for security reasons. In what many described as a David-and-Goliath-like fight, they shared several stories about how the U.S. aid has helped level the battlefield and stop the larger and more powerful Russia from grabbing more of their land.

The war exploded in 2014, shortly after Ukrainian revolutionaries ousted kleptocratic former president Viktor Yanukovich and Russia responded by invading and annexing

Crimea. Eventually, with Western help, Ukraine's military got back on its feet and halted Russia's advance, but not before much of the Donbass was lost or destroyed.

Today, much of the region is a battle-scarred wasteland. The front line that slices through it divides 6 million people—2 million living on the government-controlled side and 4 million under Russia's control. With thousands of apartment buildings and private homes badly damaged or destroyed, people who didn't have the money to flee, or didn't have family elsewhere to stay with, or had a disability, or were too stubborn to go elsewhere have been forced to rough it. They shack up in crumbling homes patched together with tape and plastic tarps, and they huddle in dark, dank basements with no ventilation, where at least they believe they're safe from shelling. Desperate, many people have hung religious icons over their doors in the hope that somebody above is looking out for them.

SOME 75 MILES southwest of Stas' position—past sandbagged checkpoints and over roads badly chewed up by military vehicles—lies the city of Avdiivka, where Svitlana Savkevych is the librarian at School No. 6. Savkevych lives with her husband in the old part of the city. In her neighborhood, there's hardly a home that hasn't been hit by gunfire or leveled by artillery shells.

"So many people and families have been killed," she said. Long gone are the days when she could stroll to the park with her family or take her students on field trips.

Instead, she said, everyone sits at home because it's just too dangerous to go outside. For those living in the crossfire, life is measured in minutes and feet—stepping out at the wrong time of day or to the wrong side of the road can mean death. Everyone's future is uncertain.

Dozens of civilians with whom I spoke said they hoped their new president could strike a deal to end more than five years of fighting. Zelensky met with Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier this month on neutral ground in Paris. In their first face-to-face meeting, the two leaders failed to find common ground on the key issues of border control and local elections, but reached a limited agreement to exchange prisoners, recommit to implementing an oft-violated cease-fire, and open three new crossing points by spring. They are supposed to meet again in four months to try for a more permanent end to the Donbass conflict. In the meantime, Ukrainian troops are holding their line.

While a stark improvement in fighting ability and professionalism since the early days of the war is noticeable at the front line, everything from soldiers' uniforms to their arms remains unsophisticated. Their ambulances are rusty Soviet-made off-road vehicles that look like Volkswagen buses. Their operating bases are ramshackle cottages and garages polka-dotted with bullet holes. And their guns are Kalashnikov rifles from aging stockpiles, reliable but inaccurate.

Indeed, the bits and pieces that remind you that the war is being fought in 2019 are few and far between—and many have come from Washington. They include counterbattery radar systems, Humvee ambulances, night-vision sights, Raven drones, bullet-proof vests, modern medical equipment, and battlefield first aid kits. The Ukrainians' prized possessions might be the lethal Javelin anti-tank missiles approved and delivered by the Trump administration last year—but on the condition they're used only in the event of a large-scale Russian offensive. Until then, they're being stored in secure locations behind the front line.

That's not to say all the American aid works well. For instance, the radars don't always pick up smaller artillery fire; the drones are prone to Russian jamming and hacking; the medical scanners run on different voltages than in Ukraine; and the Humvees suck up gas and aren't armored.

Still, without it, they would be worse off, soldiers say. Yuriy Krupko, deputy commander of Ukraine's 28th Mechanized Brigade, told a story that painted a clear picture of how U.S. aid helps them.

It was 2016, and grenades and mortars were crashing down in rapid succession, wreaking havoc on Ukrainian positions on the edge of Stanytsia Luhanska. Krupko didn't know where the artillery was coming from but could tell it was somewhere beyond the opposing hillside. He also knew that if he didn't stop the bombardment soon his brigade could lose several soldiers and a foothold in the country's eastern war zone.

In the melee, Krupko switched on a counter-battery radar system that had been delivered to Ukraine as part of a U.S. military aid package. He pinpointed the incoming fire



Savkevych: Strolls and fields trips are now too dangerous.

and predicted his enemies' next moves. Soon after, the Ukrainians unleashed their own barrage and then watched the smoke rise from their enemies' firing positions. "We totally destroyed them," Krupko said.

U.S. military equipment "saves our butts every day," he added, gesturing to a group of soldiers filing into the chow hall after a tank exercise not far from the front line last week. "And not only our butts," he continued, "but the butts of the entire Ukrainian Armed Forces."

I heard more about that in Avdiivka's Prom Zone, a *Mad Max*-like industrial wasteland filled with the detritus of war that serves as the base for Ukraine's 92nd Mechanized Brigade. There, a chain-smoking officer with piercing blue eyes by the name of Valentin showed off an American Humvee ambulance. "It's great but not for the very front line. It's not armored and it's too high. It makes us a mark when we're driving it," he said as he revved it up. "You have to be a kamikaze to take it out there. But it's better quality than what we had before."

It's gotten a lot of use in Avdiivka, where fighting has been heavy for years even as it has abated in other places along the front line. The Ukrainian military suffers casualties there on an almost daily basis. But ask any soldiers if they'll back down and they'll

tell you, hell no. "I don't know what the size of the balls on your guys are over there in the U.S.," growled Oleksandr, the sergeant in Krymske, cradling a rifle in his arms, "but we have guys with huge ones here."

TO REACH THE forsaken village of Opytne, I had to drive over a makeshift dirt road that cuts through a minefield. On the other side I met Maria Horpynych, a spirited 80-year-old who referred to herself as Baba—or "Grandma"—Masha and said she wanted nothing more than to see the war end.

Horpynych was born as World War II broke out, she told me at her modest cottage, which has fallen into disarray after being pummeled by mortars and rockets, a consequence of living within sight of the destroyed Donetsk airport. She said she hoped not to die in another war.

In far-flung Opytne, which more than 300 people used to call home, word of Trump's decision to delay U.S. aid hadn't yet reached the 39 elderly residents who remain. They don't have electricity, and phone service is shoddy; the roads are terrible and treacherous, so the news is slow to reach the village. There's also no running water and no gas to heat homes.

"We are only surviving," Horpynych said. With a heavy sigh, she added: "We used to have everything here....There were children playing in the streets."

If the war comes to an end, soldiers and residents in eastern Ukraine will be able to begin piecing their lives back together. For Horpynych, that would mean she could visit the grave of her son, Viktor. In 2015, he'd gone outside to help a neighbor fix a broken gas pipe. Not long after, that neighbor came running over to say that Viktor had been hit in the head with shrapnel from a rocket that had exploded beside them.

It was too dangerous outside for Horpynych to make it to the cemetery to bury her son. So she placed Viktor's body in a makeshift coffin and buried him in a shallow crater left by another rocket in her yard. His body stayed there for five months until she was able to exhume him and give him a proper burial. "War is misery," she said. "I wish it would end soon and we could live in peace."

Horpynych wouldn't get that chance. A little more than two weeks after we met, she died in a fire after an oil lamp or candle she used to light her cottage fell over and set it ablaze.

A version of this article originally appeared in BuzzFeedNews.com. It has been edited for The Week, and is used with permission.

Crossword No. 533: Greta Expectations by Matt Gaffney

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
20					21						22			
23									24			25	26	27
28					29		30	31	32					
				33							34			
35	36	37				38				39				
40					41				42					
43					44							45	46	47
48									49		50			
				51			52	53	54					
55	56	57				58					59			
60						61					62			
63						64					65			

- ACROSS
- 1 Turner of *Peyton Place*

5 Broadway setting

10 Hindu deity

14 Like some mochas

15 Specter in the Senate for 30 years

16 Schiff of impeachment hearings

17 Simple earring

18 Expensive cut

19 Booker on the campaign trail

20 Climate campaigner Greta Thunberg was named Person of the Year by this institution earlier this month

23 Tax dodger

24 Make sense

28 Comfy room

29 2017 Best Director nominee Greta Gerwig's new movie is a version of this classic American novel

33 Reason for denial of service, at some stores

34 Cover for 61-Across or 21-Down

35 Website boss, briefly

38 Otorhinolaryngologist, for short

39 Kefauver who investigated organized crime

40 Secular

41 Part of a division

43 Greta Van Susteren hosted this Fox News show for 14 years

45 Nitwit
- 48 Café

49 Error

51 Greta Garbo title role of 1935

55 Number of sides on a rhombus

58 Family reunion attendee

59 Nuptial trade

60 Foundation

61 Dutch cheeses

62 ___ de gallo (condiment with tortilla chips)

63 Crate & Barrel rival

64 Bowling alley button

65 Field with GDP
- DOWN
- 1 Rattled off

2 Like skiers and surfers

3 Alfred E. ___ (*Mad* magazine character)

4 Put two and two together, say

5 Trips to Kruger National Park

6 H.S. math course

7 Spaghetti ___ carbonara

8 "Oh, come on!"

9 Lures

10 Track runner

11 Tumult

12 Be a blot on

13 She's running against Joe and Elizabeth

21 Sweet gourd

22 These days

25 Send out, as a signal
- 26 Auberjonois who acted in *Boston Legal*

27 Concludes

30 "Voila!"

31 Mixer with quinine

32 Turn loose

33 Field with few experts

35 Versatile plant

36 UFC president White

37 Barack beat him

39 Redmayne who portrayed Stephen Hawking

41 Portrayer of Rameses II and King Mongkut

42 Fought-over part of an airline seat

44 Ending for east

45 How lemon drops taste

46 BP rival

47 One of seven for *30 Rock*

50 Be pettily critical

52 Attaché

53 Parrots of New Zealand

54 Highest point

55 James Comey's former org.

56 Tree sacred to Zeus

57 Put into practice
- Correction: A clue in last week's puzzle asked for the organization featured in the movie *Top Gun*. The film focuses on a Navy training program, not an Air Force program.

The Week Contest

This week's question: Scientists have discovered that plants emit high-pitched sounds too high for humans to hear when they lack water or have their stems cut. If a botanist were to write a book explaining why we all need to be kinder to our leafy friends, what should it be titled?

Last week's contest: Before last week's election, movie star Hugh Grant surprised British voters by knocking on their doors and urging them to vote for candidates who opposed the U.K.'s departure from the European Union. If Hollywood were to make a romantic comedy in which Grant plays a passionate "Remainer" who falls for a "Brexitteer," what could it title the movie?

THE WINNER: "She's Just Not That Into EU"
Dan Roscher, Johns Island, S.C.

SECOND PLACE: "Leave Actually"
Peter Gordon, Great Neck, N.Y.

THIRD PLACE: "You Had Me at Goodbye"
Paul Carroll, Garland, Texas

For runners-up and complete contest rules, please go to theweek.com/contest.

How to enter: Submissions should be emailed to contest@theweek.com. Please include your name, address, and daytime telephone number for verification; this week, type "Green scream" in the subject line. Entries are due by noon, Eastern Time, Tuesday, Jan. 7. Winners will appear on the Puzzle Page next issue and at theweek.com/puzzles on Friday, Jan. 10. In the case of identical or similar entries, the first one received gets credit.



◀ The winner gets a one-year subscription to *The Week*.

Sudoku

Fill in all the boxes so that each row, column, and outlined square includes all the numbers from 1 through 9.

Difficulty: medium

						7		
	8	2	3				6	
	4	5	6			2		3
	7	6	4		1			
			2		7	4	9	
9		8			2	5	4	
	5				6	3	1	
		7						

Find the solutions to all *The Week's* puzzles online: www.theweek.com/puzzle.

©2019. All rights reserved.

The Week (ISSN 1533-8304) is published weekly with an additional issue in October, except for one week in each January, June, July, and September. The Week is published by The Week Publications, Inc., 155 East 44th Street, 22nd fl., New York, NY 10017. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to The Week, PO Box 37252, Boone, IA 50037-0252. One-year subscription rates: U.S. \$150; Canada \$180; all other countries \$218 in prepaid U.S. funds. Publications Mail Agreement No. 40031590, Registration No. 140467846. Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to P.O. Box 503, RPO West Beaver Creek, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 4R6. The Week is a member of The New York Times News Service, The Washington Post/Bloomberg News Service, McClatchy-Tribune Information Services, and subscribes to The Associated Press.

Discover the unsearchable



Discover the forest

Find a trail near you at
DiscoverTheForest.org

